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PORTRAIT OF GORDON AS A MANDARIN.

THE

STORY OF CHINESE GORDON.

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BY

A. EGMONT HAKE,

AUTHOR OF 'PARIS ORIGINALS,' 'FLATTERING TALES,' ETC.

"One honest man, one wise man, one peaceful man commands a hundred millions, without a baton and without a charger. He wants no fortress to protect him: he stands higher than any citadel can raise him, brightly conspicuous to the most distant nations, God's servant by election, God's image by beneficence."

LANDOR.

WITH TWO PORTRAITS AND TWO MAPS.

XXNIC

EIGHTH EDITION.

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TO

ALL ADMIRERS OF CHINESE GORDON,

AND ESPECIALLY TO MY FRIEND,

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY,

This Work is Inscribed

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

To have known the true story of Chinese Gordon's life has been an education; to have written it is a privilege and an honour. For assistance in the perfection of my history, I am grateful to many; for its publication I need only apologize to one: this is Major-General Gordon himself. I have given his life to the world not only without his consent, but even without his knowledge.

THE AUTHOR.

NOTE.—In this book the author has included many facts already published by the late ANDREW WILSON *in his* 'EVER-VICTORIOUS ARMY,' *and by* DR. BIRKBECK HILL *in his* 'COLONEL GORDON IN CENTRAL AFRICA.' *This was inevitable, these facts forming part of the enormous mass of documents—private letters, despatches, maps, and so forth—of which the author has been privileged to dispose.*

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THE STORY OF CHINESE GORDON.

CHAPTER I.

THE GORDONS AND THE ENDERBYS.

This book would be interesting to many if its object were merely to set forth a detailed account of the varied and splendid exploits of Charles Gordon, and to sound his praise. Such, however, is not its only aim. The history of Christ has been recorded to the end that men might have before them the example of a perfect life. This example Charles Gordon has followed, perhaps as closely as mortal may do. To show his achievement step by step is to place the actions of such a man in a light wherein they may serve as a beacon to others; with this intention it is that the story of Chinese Gordon is given to the world.

His one aim in life has been to do his duty, and that without incurring the penalty of fame, the displeasure of being called a hero. He has always abhorred pub-

licity, he has never courted renown; yet he is among the most renowned of men, and to the peoples of three continents his name is almost a household word. Though fully conscious of irresistible strength of purpose, he claims no merit for himself. He, 'with celestial vigour armed, and plain heroic magnitude of mind,' regards no feat of war as due to efforts of his own; no peril he surmounts as due to daring; no victory he wins as due to prowess or to skill. Whatever his triumphs, he holds them none of his, but the triumphs of a higher cause, whose instrument he is and whose flag he bears.

In him are united the genius of action and the genius of morality. He has the unalterable simplicity of a character whose primary elements are the capacities of faith and love. A Lieutenant of Engineers in 1852, he is now a Major-General in the service of his own country, a Mandarin of the highest order in the service of China, and a Pasha in the service of the Porte. Yet his letters from South Africa, the scene of his latest exploits, are written in a spirit as fresh and modest as those he penned in the trenches before Sebastopol. In his present retreat at Jerusalem, he works at his self-imposed task, the reconstructive survey, half mystical, half scientific, of the Holy Sepulchre—with an intelligence as untiring and an interest as boyish and frank as he bestowed upon the

boundaries of Bessarabia and Armenia close on thirty years ago.

In every walk of life there are those whose aim it is to do their highest duties to their fellows. Examples of self-sacrifice are thickly scattered through the annals of religion, government, and war: but it has been in the power of few to bear themselves so congruously as he in the midst of incongruities; to be as gentle in times of strife as in times of peace; to vanquish so many, to condemn so few; to accept so little, and to give so much. His story, indeed, is the story of a swordless conqueror: of a true disciple of the Divine Master, who laid down His life for humanity; of a complete Christian in thought, word, and deed. The man must be peculiarly endowed who, wholly devoid of personal ambition, finds himself sought out as fittest for the highest tasks, and only accepts the position when the service demanded of him is in the cause of humanity. This, however, is the case with Gordon. Never has he looked to being great; and when, after almost miraculous achievements, greatness has been thrust upon him, he has ignored the honour implied, and declined the proffered reward. From first to last he has been content in the belief that he has done his best. This perfect disinterestedness has been consistently maintained throughout a career which has teemed with temptations and the sorest trials; which

is made up of incidents the most romantic and adventures the most desperate. This is the characteristic in one gifted with a mysterious power of fascinating his fellow-men, whether of the Western or the Eastern world. It is small wonder if to many its possessor is not merely heroic, but unique among men.

Before recounting his adventures, it will be interesting to say something of the family to which he belongs, if only to trace to their source the qualities which have contributed to the making of his strange and brilliant career. His father, the late Lieutenant-General Henry William Gordon, of the Royal Artillery, left a memoir of his family. Scanty as it is, it contains some facts worth noting. General Gordon relates, for instance, that his grandfather, David Gordon (born in 1715), a Highlander and a soldier, was taken prisoner at Preston-Pans while serving under Sir John Cope in Lascelles' Regiment (late 47th Regiment), his kinsman, Sir William Gordon of Park, fighting on the same field under the Pretender. David was released upon parole through the influence of the Duke of Cumberland whom he had met at Edinburgh, and to whom he was previously known, the Duke having some six years before stood sponsor for his son—Charles Gordon's grandfather—and given him his name of William Augustus. After Culloden, David Gordon, with his son, embarked for North America.

There he died from an accident, and was buried at Halifax in 1752. His son, the 'Butcher's' namesake, entered the British army, and served successively in the 40th, 72nd, and 11th Regiments of infantry. He fought at Minorca—also with distinction at the siege of Louisburgh in 1758; and in 1759 he was with Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham. In 1762 he witnessed the attack and surrender of the Moro Castle. On his return to England he was sent to Hexham in Northumberland, where he met his future wife, Anna Maria Clarke, at the house of her brother, the Reverend Slaughter Clarke. To this lady he was married in 1773. By her he had four daughters and three sons. Of his sons, the eldest, William Augustus, was a captain of the 95th Regiment; he died from a fall from his horse, while on duty at the Cape. The second, Augustus Henry, was educated at the Royal Military Academy, and died a Lieutenant of the Royal Engineers. The third, Henry William, born in 1786, entered the Royal Artillery, and was the only male survivor of his family in that generation. He married Elizabeth, a daughter of the late Samuel Enderby, of Blackheath, and had issue five sons and six daughters. Three of the sons entered the army; and two are still living. The youngest of these is the Captain of the Ever Victorious Army—Chinese Gordon. It will be seen from this that for a century and a half the

family has been a family of soldiers—and that without threatening extinction, for there is a new generation in the service; and that it has culminated in the genius of Charles Gordon, the most famous of his adventurous and distinguished clan.

Charles Gordon's father, whom many still recollect, was a man of marked individuality. He was a good and complete soldier, with a cultivated knowledge of his profession. He will be long remembered by those who served under him, as well as by his family and his friends, for his firm yet genial character, and his very striking figure. He was of a peculiar type. Those who knew him can never forget his lively and expressive face; his great round head—bald, and surrounded by short curly hair, black in his best days; his robust playfulness of manner; and above all the twinkle of fun in his clear blue eyes. In his company it was not possible to be dull; he had a look which diffused cheerfulness, and an inexhaustible fund of humour. On occasions he could be stern; for the essence of his character was a decision which turned to severity when others deviated from their duty, or did it amiss. He lived by the 'code of honour:' it was the motive of all his actions, and he expected those with whom he dealt to be guided by its precepts. It is said that no man succeeds in his calling unless he considers it the best and highest. This was General Gordon's feeling for

the army. So deeply did he revere the ideal of the British officer, that Charles Gordon's acceptance of a foreign command, despite its singular and momentous results, gave him no pleasure: he was proud of his son, but he did not like to think that he was serving among foreigners, and not, as a Gordon should, with the men of his own race and faith. He was greatly beloved: for he was kind-hearted, generous, genial in his nature, always just in his practice and in his aims. He spent a long life in the service, and, like his son, was less fitted to obey than to command. More than once, well as he knew the value of discipline, it was his to resist his superiors, and to protest against dictates which he would hold to be superfluous and unjust. No portrait* left of him does him justice, or in the least recalls a face which all who knew it remember as noble and commanding.

His wife, Charles Gordon's mother, was no less remarkable a character. She possessed a perfect temper; she was always cheerful under the most trying circumstances, and she was always thoughtful of others; she contended with difficulties without the slightest display of effort; and she had a genius for making the best of everything. During the Crimean War her

* One which pictures him as a cadet of the Royal Woolwich Academy, by Dr. Walcott (Peter Pindar), is in possession of his eldest son.

anxieties were interminable: she had three sons and several near kinsmen at the front. She was perfectly equal to the strain. Her hopefulness remained unclouded; all day long did she busy herself with the wants of others at home and in the field; while a duty remained to do, or a kindness to bestow, her sunny energy maintained her at her work. She came of a family — originally from Leicestershire — of merchants and explorers: a family which presented a marked contrast with that race of the 'gay Gordons' with which in her person it was allied. Her father, Samuel Enderby, made himself in connection with geographical research a name which still has a conspicuous place on the map of the world. A London merchant for many years, he took a prominent part in opening up the resources of the Southern Hemisphere. Previous to the War of Independence, he worked and traded much in America. There he trafficked in the whale fishery, the ships engaged in it being his own, and their crews in his pay. The produce he sent on to England in vessels also his own property. Two of these, outward bound for Boston from the Thames, were chartered by the English Government to carry the tea which proved the occasion of the Revolution. Their arrival in Boston harbour is matter of history. Both were boarded by the rebels. They broke open the chests of tea, and

emptied them over the side; and so was struck the first blow for American independence.

In those days colonial ships were not often permitted to sail from England with British registers. Samuel Enderby was a favoured exception among owners. The bottoms he owned in America, and in which he traded between that colony and his own country, were specially licensed—for the whaling traffic only—to sail from London as well as from Boston or New York, and to pursue adventure in all quarters of the ocean. The practice of this privilege had some important results. Under the terms of the East India Company's charter, it was unlawful for any ship to go east of the Cape without the Company's license, or to trade in those waters except under conditions in the Company's gift. Such a license was not easily obtained, the H.E.I.C. being in the enjoyment of a monopoly of the largest and richest type, which it was bent upon working entirely to its own advantage. As the ways of the Southern Ocean were very little known, except to such bold and hardy navigators as Cook and La Perouse, whose aims were purely geographical and scientific, and as there was no trade to be done in them by private owners, they were practically no more than a vast whaling-ground, frequented only by fishermen in search of oil and spermaceti, and closed and barren to all the world besides. Samuel Enderby, as I have said, was

one of the boldest of all the whaling owners: and it is thanks to his enterprise and constancy, and to those of the men who followed in his wake, that the Southern Hemisphere was opened up so soon. This was particularly the case with Australia and New Zealand. They lay outside the limits of the H.E.I.C.'s adventure, and they offered the H.E.I.C. no inducement either to traffic or explore; so that but for the Enderby whalers they might have remained in idleness and desolation much longer than they did. It was on the occasion of the foundation of our first penal settlement that the Enderby fleet became directly useful. It had been decided that such an establishment should be essayed; and it had been found that the expense of carrying convicts out in bottoms for which there was no chance of finding a return freight was an almost insurmountable objection. The practice of the Enderby whalers removed the difficulty. They were in the habit of going out to the fishing-grounds in ballast, and of picking up a return freight at the voyage-end. It was seen that they might as well be laden with men as with casks of water; and the issue was that they took out to Botany Bay the first batch of convicts ever settled on Australian shores. The communication thus established was by their means continued: they took out settlers as well as 'lags;' more than once they saved the

community of exiles from starvation; they may certainly be said to have borne no unimportant part in the settlement of our greatest dependency. And their presence in Southern waters was fraught with issues hardly less momentous for New Zealand than Australia. It was mainly by runaways from them and their sisters and rivals that the two islands were first settled. The habits and customs of these gentry—who plied the Maoris with firearms and rum, and cheated them in return of great expanses of territory—obliged the Home Government to interfere. To put a stop to their depredations it was found necessary to annex the whole country; and this—although the English Government was loth to do it—is what was actually done.

Nor is this all. The Enderby whalers were the first to frequent the Pacific round the dreadful Horn, and abolish the bugbear that for centuries had perched upon its cliffs. To the southward they explored the Antarctic Ocean, and under the command of Briscoe and of Bellamy discovered the Auckland Islands, with Enderby and Graham's Lands. Their initiative has since been followed up by the English, French, and American Governments, under Sir James Ross, Admiral d'Urville, and Commodore Wilkes, who—it may be added—have done little more than confirm the correctness of their researches. To the northward they made themselves useful to Pitt, and were active in the contraband trade

with the western states of South America, which the Heaven-Born Minister designed and encouraged to the prejudice of the natural enemy.* They were the first to attempt the whale fishery in Japanese waters; and they did their best to open trade with the Middle Kingdom. It will be seen that they were the primary cause of our acquaintance with and settlement of all the important colonies in the Southern Ocean, from Australia to the Fijian Archipelago.

Gordon was educated at Taunton, and at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. There is but little to say about his early life. He was not strong, and this may account for his doing nothing really noteworthy either at school or in his later examinations. In this part of his story there was always humour, and now and then there were flashes of that resolution and energy which have since shown themselves in so many ways, and to such splendid purpose. Once, for instance, during his cadetship at the Academy, he was rebuked for incompetence, and told

* The story goes that the Spanish Government had issued a proclamation to the effect that any ship caught within fifty miles of these coasts should be confiscated. The prohibition pressed hard upon Enderby's undertakings, and he complained of it to Pitt. Pitt asked him, 'What distance would satisfy you?' and was told that he would be content with twenty miles. 'Make it five,' says Pitt; 'and if you are caught within that limit, say you are short of water and need a supply.'

that he would never make an officer; whereupon he tore the epaulets from his shoulders and flung them at his superior's feet.

On leaving the Royal Academy of Woolwich for service as an officer of Engineers, he was ordered to Pembroke. Here he was engaged in making plans for forts at the entrance of the Haven. This was in August, 1854, and in November in the same year he got orders for Corfu. These were in one sense disappointing to him, for he had lived in the hope of being sent to the Crimea; on the other hand, he was in fear of being drafted to the West Indies or to New Zealand, and thus of being removed out of reach of the war. It was natural that he should display no great eagerness to revisit the Ionian Islands, inasmuch as his father had commanded the artillery for some years at Corfu during Charles Gordon's boyhood. He therefore asked two months' leave, to be spent on duty at Pembroke. This he obtained; and early in December his route was changed, and he was making arrangements to leave for the Crimea.

CHAPTER II.

THE CRIMEA—BESSARABIA—ARMENIA.

He left England in company with the Honourable F. Keane, now Major-General Keane, C.B., who was then in charge of a battery.

At Constantinople, he saw, for the first time, blows struck in real earnest, as he was present at a serious *fracas* between the Native police and the French troops, in which some of the latter were badly wounded. On January 1st, 1855, he reached Balaclava in the *Golden Fleece*, and reported himself at headquarters; but as he was not detailed for any duty for some weeks, he had plenty of time to look about him. His letters home give a vivid picture of the position of affairs. He tells us that though the French were advancing in their works, the English were at a standstill. Supplies were short, and officers and men were engaged in foraging expeditions, as the Commissariat had completely broken down. The streets and villages were crowded with a military

rabble. English cavalry and artillery, Turks, Zouaves and camp-followers of every description mingled with the sickly troops of Omar Pasha, who were nearly as ill-fed as their own half-starved camels that helped to block the roads. The cold, which was intense, was fatal to many, while others were perishing of suffocation by the fumes of charcoal fires. Everything was in confusion, and everybody more or less despondent. Food, how and where to get it, was the one absorbing interest; and no one seemed to know—or even care to know—what progress was being made in the siege.

So things went on for nearly a month, when Gordon was detailed for duty in the trenches before Sebastopol. His letter home, dated February 14th, describes accurately the kind of work he had to do; and gives an account of how, after being fired upon first by the English sentries, and then by the Russian pickets, and how after the working party and sentries under his command had bolted, he was able to carry out his first definite order on active service. This was to effect a junction by means of rifle-pits between the French and English sentries who were stationed in advance of the trenches.

The manner and the circumstances of this, Gordon's first important duty, are in some sort typical of his whole achievement. As will be seen later on, he was

frequently fired upon by friends as well as by foes, and several of his most notable conquests were made almost single-handed, after those whom he had under his command had mutinied or deserted him.

The siege of Sebastopol extended over a period of nearly eleven months, as it was begun in October, 1854, and only completed in September, 1855. Balaclava was fought on October 25th, 1854, and Inkerman on November 5th in the same year. Gordon's first experience of active service was in February, 1855; and it is with affairs from that date up to the final assault upon Sebastopol on September 8th, that I have now to deal.

The impressions, or, perhaps more correctly, the expressions of a young subaltern, during the early part of his military career, have only a special interest for the public after that subaltern has developed into a more important person. It is because Gordon has become famous, not only as a leader of men, but also as a planner of campaigns, that I am tempted to deal at some length with the comparatively trivial work he did in the Crimea, especially as it gives me an opportunity of quoting his opinion upon some few of those matters of history which took place under his eye.

Evidence of military capacity is not wanting even at this early period of his soldiering, and the

serene earnest and religious fervour which has since been characteristic of the man, was at this time distinctly marked. Years have only served to strengthen, not to change it.

From February 28th to April 9th Gordon's duty was limited to the making of new batteries in the advance trenches. During the whole of this time active operations against the enemy seemed to have almost ceased, save for a prolonged and feeble duel between the French rocket battery and the Russian artillery, the effect of which was very slight on either side. Now and then the wearisome work of throwing up battery after battery was relieved by the excitement of a dropping fire, either from the enemy's trenches or from the heights in the rear, and this was returned by the working-party under the command of the Engineer officers.

It was during this time that Gordon met with a very narrow escape from a bullet fired at him from one of the lower Russian rifle-pits, some 180 yards away. The missile passed within an inch of his head; but in referring to the incident in one of his letters home his only comment is: 'They (the Russians) are very good marksmen; their bullet is large and pointed.'

A few days after this one of his captains, named Craigie, was killed by a splinter from the enemy's shells, and Gordon writing home of the casualty winds

up by saying: 'I am glad to say that he (Captain Craigie) was a serious man. The shell burst above him, and *by what is called chance* struck him in the back, killing him at once.' The words italicised are noteworthy. They are the words of a fatalist; and they furnish the first written evidence we have of the religious convictions which have controlled the writer's actions. That all things are ordained by God is the belief he held even when he wrote of Craigie's death. That it has been greatly strengthened by strange personal adventures in later years there is no doubt; but through all its development it has remained essentially the same. Milton's lines,

> 'Necessity or chance
> Approach not me, and what I will is fate,'

are applicable to Gordon's belief in himself. His will he holds to be identical with God's—with God's, whose instrument he feels and knows he is.

At the time of the Czar's death, which took place in March, 1855, the number of French troops in the Crimea was 80,000, the number of the English 23,000. Of the former Gordon speaks in rather disparaging terms, for he says in one letter: 'The Russians are brave, better I think than the French, who begin to fear them;' and again, in another letter of a later date: 'I cannot say much for our allies; they

are afraid to do anything, and consequently quite cramp our movements. The Russians certainly are inferior to none; their work is stupendous, and their shell-practice beautiful.'

On April 9th heavy firing was resumed on both sides, and continued, with short intervals of cessation, up to the 30th inst. During this time the casualties in the trenches were many, with a large proportion of officers to men among the killed. Gordon was untouched, though actively engaged during the whole time, and present at several sorties in front of the Redan, in one of which several officers and seventy men were killed and wounded. Writing on April 20th he refers to the weakness of our ally. He says: 'I think we might have assaulted on Monday, but the French do not seem to care about it. The garrison is 25,000, and on that day we heard afterwards that only 800 men were in the place, so the rest had gone to repel an attack (fancied) of ours at Inkerman.' And on April 30th he says: 'We are still pushing batteries forward as much as possible, but cannot advance our trenches until the French take the Mamelon, as it enfilades our advance works. Until that occurs, things are at a stand-still.' This was on April 30th. Thenceforward, until early in the month of June, active operations ceased: and though innumerable councils of war were held, nothing definite

was done or decided upon. Gordon's letters home during this time have no special interest. I shall make but a single extract which is certainly worth reading: 'We have a great deal to regret in the want of good working clergymen, there being none here that I know of who interest themselves about the men.'

On the 6th of June the English opened fire from all their batteries, and there ensued a tremendous artillery duel, in which 1,000 guns were engaged. The casualties on the Russian side were numerous, while our own were few. Gordon, who was in the trenches during the whole time, was returned as among the wounded, but his injury was such that he was able to continue his duty. A stone thrown up by a round shot stunned him for a second, but did him no further hurt. On the following day the French attacked the Mamelon, and the redoubts of Selinghinck and Volhynia. The Russians retreated towards the Malakoff, and were rapidly followed by the French; but the latter were so punished by the guns from the tower that they had to retire, pursued by the very enemy they had been pursuing. However, they attacked again, and while we secured the quarries, they carried the Mamelon, as well as the redoubts before-named. 'Only a few lines,' writes his brother from the scene of action, 'to say Charley is all right, and has escaped amidst a terrific shower of grape and shells of every

description. You may imagine the suspense I was kept in until assured of his safety. He cannot write himself, and is now fast asleep in his tent, having been in the trenches from 2 o'clock yesterday morning during the cannonade until 7 last night, and again from 12,30 this morning until noon.' Gordon in his account of this successful assault says: 'I do not think the place (Sebastopol) can hold out another ten days; and once taken, the Crimea is ours.' Sebastopol did hold out for nearly ten times ten days, but many officers in high command have since expressed their belief that the siege might have been brought to an end in June instead of in September. When Gordon wrote, the allied armies numbered nearly 165,000; the French were erecting a battery on the Mamelon; the Russian works had been completely ruined; and their fleet—its old position made untenable by the capture of the redoubts—had moved out into the middle of the harbour. There was an armistice for a few days, for the burial of the dead; and had it been succeeded by a bold assault upon the Malakoff Tower, the Redan, and the Central Bastion, the probability is that Gordon's impression as to the duration of the siege would have proved correct. Instead of this, however, there ensued a period of inactivity, during which Gordon in his letters home for the first and only time alludes to his wants,—a map of the

Crimea and a bottle of Rowland's Odonto. From this time forth to the evacuation of Sebastopol on September 8th, the siege operations were proceeded with slowly and deliberately, but with a lack of energy and activity that was wearisome and irritating. Gordon's duty kept him in the trenches during the whole time; but beyond stating that his officers speak of his zeal and intelligence in terms of admiration and affection, I can say little or nothing definite of his actions. I am, however, disposed to select from his letters home the following paragraphs, inasmuch as they will enable the reader to gain some insight into the further progress of the siege, as well as into the character and disposition of the writer.

'*June 15th.*—The Russians are down-hearted, although determined; they are much to be admired, and their officers are quite as cool as our officers under fire.'

'*June 30th.*—Lord Raglan died on the evening of the 26th, of tear and wear and general debility. He was universally regretted, as he was so kind. I am really sorry for him, his life has been entirely spent in the service of his country. *I hope he was prepared, but do not know.*'

'*August 3rd.*—We are disappointed that General Jones did not mention Brown in the attack on the Quarries. I, for one, do not care about being "lamented" after death. I am tired of the inactivity, but when we move again in advance or assault it will break the monotony.'

'*August* 17*th*.—Sebastopol is now in every part under our fire, but the caves underground protect the men to a great degree. They have fired shot into, around, and over our camp from guns placed or slung as the guns were in the Baltic, at a high elevation of 35° or 40°. Two shots went within three yards of my pony, which, however, Government would repay if killed. I am not ambitious, but what easily-earned C.B.'s and Majorities there are in some cases; while men who have earned them, like poor Oldfield, get nothing. I am sorry for him. He was always squabbling about his batteries with us, but he got more done by his perseverance than any man before did. I am obliged to conclude, but can tell you that this opening fire is only to reduce the fire from the place, so that they may not annoy us by shell or shot for a few days.'

'*August* 24*th*.—Our fire has ceased again after four days, and now we are still in uncertainty as to what is to be done. I think the French will go in at the Malakoff Tower in a fortnight, they have been working up pretty close during our firing. The Redan looks very sickly as we fire platoons of musketry to prevent the Russians repairing it, and give them shells all night. The Russians repay us by baskets of shells, perhaps twelve at a time, 5½″ each, fired from a big mortar; it requires to be lively to get out of their way. What a consolation it will be to get the place. I have now been thirty-four times twenty-four hours in the trenches, more than a month straight on end; it gets tedious after a time, but if anything is going on one does not mind. The Russian prisoners taken the other day seem to say that they are obliged to attack us as they have no provisions, and also say that their army is desperate. From what I can hear, I imagine that if

(as I do not think likely) we fail this next assault, we shall make some great effort elsewhere.'

'*August* 31*st*.—The Russians still keep us on the *qui vive*, but they have not much chance, as we are quite awake to their endeavours, and have entrenched ourselves well on every side. How I should like a week in September partridge-shooting! it is very tedious here, with nothing going on. The French still continue to sap into the Malakoff. I expect the Russians have had almost enough of it, as their work must be very hard. I send a sketch of the Mamelon; it will be a well-known place in after years. Captain Du Cane* has gone sick to Corfu, and Captain Wolseley† (90th Regiment), an assistant Engineer, has been slightly wounded with a stone.'

'*September* 7*th*.—I hope by the time this reaches you, you will have received the news of our having taken the south side of Sebastopol. We attempt it to-morrow, and I think with better chance of success than last time. We opened fire on the 5th, and have continued it ever since. I have nothing more to tell until next mail, when I do hope to give you good news.'

The day after this letter was written the Malakoff was taken by the French at noon, when the tricolour was hoisted on the tower as a signal for us to attack the Redan. Our men went forward in high spirits, and with comparatively small loss succeeded in planting their ladders in the ditch and entering the Redan,

* Now Sir E. Du Cane, K.C.B.

† Now Lord Wolseley, who although a captain in the army, served under lieutenants of Engineers in the trenches, and did excellent service, being twice wounded, and yet no promotion.

which they held for half an hour, but were then driven out with terrible loss by an enormous Russian reserve. At the same time the French were repulsed in their assault on the Central Bastion, when they lost four general officers. Thus, the immediate result of the day's work was the taking of the Malakoff only. In the evening it was decided that the Redan should be stormed next morning by the Highlanders. This operation, however, was not undertaken, for the Russians evacuated Sebastopol before it could be carried into effect.

Gordon had been as usual detailed for the trenches on the morning of the 9th, and his account of what he saw at daybreak is best given in his own words. He says: 'During the night of the 8th I heard terrific explosions, and on going down to the trenches at four the next morning I saw a splendid sight. The whole of Sebastopol was in flames, and every now and then terrible explosions took place, while the rising sun shining on the place had a most beautiful effect. The Russians were leaving the town by the bridge; all the three-deckers were sunk, the steamers alone remaining. Tons and tons of powder must have been blown up. About eight o'clock I got an order to commence a plan of the works, for which purpose I went to the Redan, where a dreadful sight was presented. The dead were buried in the ditch—

the Russians with the English—Mr. Wright reading the Burial Service over them.' The fires in the town continued until the following day, so that it was not safe for the English troops to attempt to effect an entry until the evening of the 10th.

Shortly after the surrender of Sebastopol, Gordon joined the force that laid siege to Kinburn, and was present at the capture of that fortress. He then returned to the Crimea and from that time until February, 1856, a period of four months, was engaged, almost without interruption, in destroying the dockyard, forts, quays, barracks, and store-houses of the fallen stronghold. With this work of demolition—a work as uninteresting as it was arduous—his duties in the Crimea came to an end.

What I have written has been taken chiefly from private letters sent by Gordon to his friends and relatives. From such documents it is quite impossible to learn how he stood in the estimation of others, or what were his real deserts as regards the performance of his duties in the trenches and elsewhere. But, fortunately, there is other testimony at hand, and in quoting that of one officer, I am quoting the substance of that of many others. Colonel C. C. Chesney, in writing on Gordon's after-career in China, says:

'Gordon had first seen war in the hard school of the "black winter" of the Crimea. In his humble position as an Engineer subaltern he attracted the notice of his superiors, not merely by his energy and activity, but by a special aptitude for war, developing itself amid the trench work before Sebastopol in a personal knowledge of the enemy's movements *such as no other officer attained.* We used to send him to find out what new move the Russians were making.'

General Jones especially mentioned him as an officer who had done gallant service, but who, from the constitution of the corps, wherein promotion goes by seniority, could not be promoted. Add to this that he was decorated with the Legion of Honour—a special mark of distinction not often conferred upon so young an officer—and the proof of his valour and conduct are complete. It will be seen that young as he was he had made his mark, and had begun to do the best that was in him.

In May, 1856, Gordon was appointed Assistant Commissioner, and ordered to join Major Stanton* in Bessarabia, to help in the work of laying down the new frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Roumania. Besides Major Stanton, the Commissioners for the new boundary consisted of representative French, Russian, and Austrian officers. There was also a representative of Moldavia, to whom the Russian

* Now Lieutenant-General Sir E. Stanton.

Commissioner objected, probably to gain time, on the ground that he was not mentioned in the treaty.

The duties of Gordon and his colleague James were to trace a boundary about 100 miles in length, and then to compare the Russian maps with their own—to discover, in fact, whether the former were correct, and, in case they were not, to survey the ground afresh. To go about in the summer days and nights, with Eastern cities to visit and a new and delightful country to explore, was no unpleasant change for two young fellows, war-worn and weary with a year's service in the Crimea, and with month after month of bitter work in the trenches. Gordon enjoyed himself greatly, and was keenly interested in all he saw.

The old boundary extended from Tchernowitz along the Pruth to Kili on the Black Sea, the territory lying between the river and Bessarabia having been ceded to Russia in 1812. By the Treaty of Paris of 1856 that territory was to be given back to the principality; and the new boundary eventually determined by the Commissioners extended from Bourna Sola on the Black Sea to Bolgrad, and thence to Kotimore, from which point the frontier of 1812 remained unaltered. So many disputes arose between the various representatives that the settlement of the question detained the Commissioners eleven months in these districts. During this period Gordon was engaged in travelling

from place to place, now on surveying expeditions, now as the bearer of despatches, now as the maker of fresh maps of disputed points. In this way he visited Akerman, Bolgrad, Kotimore, Kichenev (where the Commissioners resided), Reni, Seratzika, and Jassy. There was great variety in the life he led, and with his inquiring mind and sunny temper he was not the man to let time hang heavily on his hands; yet when the survey came to an end, he was sorry to find himself ordered to undertake similar duties in another country. Indeed, in April, 1857, when he received instructions to join Colonel Simmons* for delimitating the boundary in Asia, he sent a telegram home asking whether it were possible for him to exchange. But his value was already known, and the answer said: 'Lieutenant Gordon must go.'

The details of his sojourn in Armenia would be hardly more interesting, except to his immediate kinsmen and friends, than the particulars of his experience in the Danubian Principality and on the Russian frontier. While, in the execution of his duties as Commissioner, he visited many places—Erzeroum, Kars, Erivan, the ruins of Arni—he yet found time to study the strategic points of a country illustrious and interesting as the scene of many battles. And while at Erivan he ascended Little and Great Ararat, with

* Now General Sir Lintorne Simmons, G.C.B.

the view of personally ascertaining their respective heights. Here it was that he first met with uncivilized tribes—tribes not unlike those with which in later life he was so brilliantly to deal; and he already showed how he would one day influence such in the manner in which he mixed with Kurds and fraternized with their chiefs.

After six months thus spent in these regions, he went back to Constantinople to be present at a Conference of the Commission. Here he remained longer than he expected, to nurse his chief, who had fallen ill. This done, he was not sorry to return to England after his three years' absence. Another six months in England, and he was once more sent to Armenia as Commissioner. Here he remained from the spring of 1858 until nearly the end of the year, employed in verifying the frontier he had taken so active a part in laying down, and in examining the new road between the Russian and Turkish dominions.

During the next year he was engaged at Chatham as Field-work Instructor and Adjutant.

CHAPTER III.

THE TAI-PING REBELLION.

In the middle of July, 1860, he left home for China, travelling by Paris and Marseilles, and visiting in turn Malta, Alexandria, Aden, Ceylon, Singapore, and Hong-Kong. On his arrival at the last-named place, the mail from the north came in, bringing the news of the capture of the Taku forts. As, however, no counter-orders arrived relative to the stopping of officers going north, he was ordered a passage, and left on the 11th of September for Shanghai, whence, after one day's stay, he continued his journey for Tientsin, having travelled in all sixty-eight days. He had not been there long before he learned that his colleague, De Norman, with Mr. Parkes, Mr. Loch, Captains Anderson and Brabazon, Mr. Bowlby, and fourteen others, had been taken prisoners by San-ko-lin-sin. In consequence of this outrage, the allies marched on Pekin in October, and the city was invested. Gordon took part in the operations, and was present at the

sacking and the burning of the Summer Palace on October the 12th.

The following is an account he gives of the part he took in that famous affair:

'On the 11th October we were sent down in a great hurry to throw up works and batteries against the town, as the Chinese refused to give up the gate we required them to surrender before we would treat with them. They were also required to give up all the prisoners. You will be sorry to hear that the treatment they have suffered has been very bad. Poor De Norman, who was with me in Asia, is one of the victims. It appears that they were tied so tight by the wrists that the flesh mortified, and they died in the greatest torture. Up to the time that elapsed before they arrived at the Summer Palace they were well treated, but then the ill-treatment began. The Emperor is supposed to have been there at the time.

'To go back to the work—the Chinese were given until twelve on the 13th to give up the gate. We made a lot of batteries, and everything was ready for the assault of the wall, which is battlemented, and forty feet high, but of inferior masonry. At 11.30 p.m., however, the gate was opened, and we took possession; so our work was of no avail. The Chinese had then until the 23rd to think over our terms of treaty, and to pay up £10,000 for each Englishman and £500 for each native soldier who died during their captivity. This they did, and the money was paid and the treaty signed yesterday. I could not witness it, as all officers commanding companies were obliged to remain in camp, owing to the ill-treatment the prisoners experienced at the Summer Palace. The General ordered it to be

Yangtze River
Yangtze River
Tsungming Island
Grand Canal
Grand Canal
Grand Canal
Taiho Lake
Nankin
Chiangchung
Tayun
Kongyn
Waisoo
Fushan
Chan chiu
Kintang
Wusieh
Mahtauchow
Kajow
Hwangtang
Tsaiqua
Leeka
Quinsan
Taitsan
Woo'sung
Soochow
Low Mun
Pahtchow
Wuliangchow
Kahpoo
Wukong
Shanghai
Sungkiang
Livang
Yeeling
Tajowka
Wuchufu
Pingwan
Kashing
MAP OF THE COUNTRY
TRAVERSED BY GORDON
in the Campaign against
THE TAI-PINGS
Scale
118° E. Lon.
120°
121°
London: Remington & Co.

destroyed, and stuck up proclamations to say why it was ordered. We accordingly went out, and, after pillaging it, burned the whole place, destroying in a Vandal-like manner most valuable property, which could not be replaced for four millions. We got upwards of £48 apiece prize-money before we went out here; and although I have not as much as many, I have done well. Imagine D—— giving 16s. for a string of pearls which he sold the next day for £500. . . . The people are civil, but I think the grandees hate us, as they must after what we did to the palace. You can scarcely imagine the beauty and magnificence of the places we burnt. It made one's heart sore to burn them; in fact, these palaces were so large, and we were so pressed for time, that we could not plunder them carefully. Quantities of gold ornaments were burned, considered as brass. It was wretchedly demoralizing work for an army. Everybody was wild for plunder.

'You would scarcely conceive the magnificence of this residence, or the tremendous devastation the French have committed. The throne and room were lined with ebony, carved in a marvellous way. There were huge mirrors of all shapes and kinds, clocks, watches, musical boxes with puppets on them, magnificent china of every description, heaps and heaps of silks of all colours, embroidery, and as much splendour and civilization as you would see at Windsor; carved ivory screens, coral screens, large amounts of treasure, etc. The French have smashed everything in the most wanton way.

'It was a scene of utter destruction which passes my description.'

For a month after these events Gordon remained in

camp before Pekin, paying occasional visits to the capital, and making his observations on the Chinese and their modes of living. On November the 8th the two armies left for Tientsin, there to take up their winter quarters; and Gordon, with his regiment, went as commanding Royal Engineer. His stay there was prolonged, however, over a much longer period than he had expected; for, with the exception of a few excursions, he remained there till the spring of 1862. During this time he was engaged in providing for the wants of his troops, in surveying the neighbouring country in parts where no European had ever been seen, and in occasional rides to the Taku forts and back, a distance of 140 miles; indeed his longest absence from Tientsin did not exceed two months, and this was on the occasion of an expedition he made on horseback to the Outer Wall, with his comrade, Lieutenant Cardew—a tour full of adventure, and for which they gained great credit, having visited, in the course of their journeys, regions before unknown to Europeans.

Beyond this excursion, his many rides, and surveying expeditions, there is little to record of his doings at Tientsin. An account he gives, however, of a terrific dust-storm in which he was caught on April 5th, 1862, is not without interest:

'We had a tremendous dust-storm on the 26th at 3 p.m. The sky was as dark as night; huge columns of dust came sweeping down, and it blew a regular hurricane, the blue sky appearing now and then through the breaks. The quantity of dust was indescribable. A canal about 50 miles long, and 18 feet wide and 7 feet deep, was completely filled up; and boats which had been floating merrily down to Tientsin found themselves at the end of the storm on a bank of sand, the canal having been filled up, and the waters absorbed. They will have to be carried to the Peiho, and have already commenced to move. The canal was everywhere passable, and will have to be re-excavated. The boat-owners looked very much disgusted at their predicament, which was not pleasant. The storm lasted sixteen hours, and the vibrations of the aneroid barometer were very extraordinary. I, of course, was caught in it coming from Taku, and, after vainly attempting to get on, was obliged to stop at a village. The darkness was such that it enforced candles being lighted at 3 p.m., and it came on very suddenly. I left my house for a few yards, and could not find it again for ten minutes. . . . Of course, I came in for it, because I am peculiarly lucky in this way in my rides from Taku. Numbers of junks were lost, and forty-five Chinamen drowned, at Taku. Two officers of the 31st Regiment were *en route* for Taku by boat, and one of them started to get a coat when the storm began. He lost his way, fell into every ditch he could find in the neighbourhood (and there are not a few), and had to sleep in a grave all night. He was brought in quite wild and blind the next morning. The thermometer fell to 25° from 60° during the night, so we did not have a comfortable time of it.'

In May, 1862, the Tai-ping rebels becoming troublesome in the neighbourhood of Shanghai, it was considered necessary to undertake some operations against them. 700 of the 31st Regiment and 200 of the 67th Regiment were consequently ordered up to that port, and Gordon having despatched them from the Taku forts, himself followed in a few days. He was at once appointed to the command of the district, and was given the charge of the Engineers' part in an expedition against the rebels. He led his men to Singpoo, stormed and entered it, taking a number of rebels prisoners; and thence he moved to other parts in the possession of the Tai-pings, and drove them from their strongholds. The towns were stored with rice stolen from the neighbouring peasants, and their misery was intense. For some months no further steps were taken to keep off the rebels, and Gordon returned to Shanghai to resume his official duties there. In October, however, he started for Kahding, on a more difficult enterprise than his previous ones, for in order to reach it broken bridges had to be repaired. 5,000 rebels had taken refuge in the town, and on the first night of attack they made some resistance; but the walls being escaladed by the English troops the Tai-pings made their escape to Taitsan, an important stronghold on the road to Soochow. This was the last of the attacks made on these marauders, with the

view to clearing a radius of thirty miles round Shanghai for the protection of its citizens. The step was indeed necessary, for when least expected these robbers made raids on the outlying suburbs, forcing the peasants to take refuge in the city. Gordon constantly refers to the depredations of these ruthless land-pirates.

'We had a visit from the marauding Tai-pings the other day,' he says. 'They came close down in small parties to the settlement and burnt several houses, driving in thousands of inhabitants. We went against them and drove them away, but did not kill many. They beat us into fits in getting over the country, which is intersected in every way with ditches, swamps, etc. . . . You can scarcely conceive the crowds of peasants who come into Shanghai when the rebels are in the neighbourhood—upwards of 15,000 I should think, and of every size and age—many strapping fellows who could easily defend themselves come running in with old women and children.

'The people on the confines are suffering very greatly, and are in fact dying of starvation. It is most sad, this state of affairs, and our Government really ought to put the rebellion down. Words could not depict the horrors these people suffer from the rebels, or describe the utter desert they have made of this rich province.'

During the next few months he was engaged on a survey of the thirty miles radius round Shanghai, a

task fraught with the greatest difficulty and danger owing to the disturbed state of the country; but its prosecution, as will be afterwards seen, turned out to be of infinite value to Gordon a little later.

'I have been now in every town and village in the thirty miles radius,' he says, on the completion of the work: 'The country is the same everywhere—a dead flat with innumerable creeks and bad pathways. The people have now settled down quiet again, and I do not anticipate the rebels will ever come back; they are rapidly on the decline, and two years ought to bring about the utter suppression of the revolt. I do not write what we saw, as it amounts to nothing. There is nothing of any interest in China; if you have seen one village, you have seen the whole country. I have really an immensity to do. It will be a good thing if the Government support the propositions which are made to the Chinese.

'The weather here is delightful: a fine cold clear air which is quite invigorating after the summer heats. There is very good pheasant-shooting in the half-populated districts, and some quail at uncertain times. It is extraordinary to see the quantities of fishing-cormorants there are in the creeks. These cormorants are in flocks of forty and fifty, and the owner in a small canoe travels about with them; they fish three or four times a day, and are encouraged by the shouts of their owners to dive. I have scarcely ever seen them come up without a fish in their beaks, which they swallow; but not for any distance, for there is a ring to prevent it going down altogether. They get

such dreadful attacks of mumps, their throats being distended by the fish which are alive, when the birds seem as if they were pouter pigeons; they are hoisted into the boats, and there are very sea-sick. Would you consider the fish a dainty ?'

We now approach the most romantic incidents of Gordon's career—the incidents which won him the name of Chinese Gordon. But before following the young commander in his desperate onslaught upon the Tai-ping rebels, it will be necessary for me to state, in few words, the causes which led to the then disturbed state of China, and to sketch the attempts of others before him to grapple with the now vast power that threatened dominion over the whole empire.

The Tai-ping Rebellion was the outcome of an egoism such as the world has rarely seen—the egoism of one man who, assisted by the accidents of general discontent, gathered to him millions of adherents, and, deluding them into the belief that they were the soldiers of a divine cause, spread ruin, fire, and famine over the length and breadth of the Flowery Land.

At a time when the province of Kwang-tung was infested by pirates, bandits, and secret societies; when discontent was rife, and, in the Opium War of 1842, the discontented had learned the use of arms; a village

schoolmaster named Hung-tsue-schuen declared himself to be inspired—inspired to the usurpation of the Dragon throne. Some thought him mad; but as his clansmen numbered 20,000, and the means he employed to convert them were masterly to a degree, he soon collected about him a band of followers not unlike an army. He was a seer of visions, a prophet of vengeance and freedom, an agent of the Divine Wrath, a champion of the poor and the oppressed. To the persecuted Hakkas* he gave out that his mission was the extermination of the hated Manchoo race and the glorious reinstatement of the Mings. He had seen God, and the Almighty had Himself appealed to him as the Second Celestial Brother. So he said, and so his lieges were mad enough to believe. What he really had seen was a missionary in flowing robes, who gave him a bundle of tracts, and told him that he should attain to the highest rank in China. Thus it is not the least curious point in this man's history that his ideas originated in certain tracts which were given him by a European missionary—that, in fact, the Tai-ping Rebellion, of which Hung was the leader, was in some sort the outcome of an attempt to spread the Gospel among the Chinese.

The mandarins were more insolent than ever to the oppressed race of Hung, and the future rebel king

* The Hakka, or 'Stranger.'

was incensed at not passing certain examinations which would give him a worthy place among the *literati*. With his little army of converts he traversed his province on a proselytizing tour, breaking the idols and effacing the Confucian texts from the walls of schools and temples. The doctrine of extermination, thus early practised by the Tai-pings, soon brought them into collision with the mandarins, and many disturbances arose, in which sometimes the authorities, and sometimes the Tai-pings, gained the day. Hung's tactics the while were worthy so great and able a trickster. Once, for example, finding himself and his followers hard pressed, and obliged to shift their ground for want of provisions, he left his quarters secretly, while a squadron of boys and women went on drumming within the walls. His enemy believed him still on the ground, when he and his men were miles away.

Defeat and victory alike drew new recruits to his following; and, in 1851, having got together an army some hundreds of thousands strong, he proclaimed himself the Heavenly King, the Emperor of the Great Peace. Then, with five Wangs, or warrior kings, chosen from among his kinsmen, he marched through China, devastating the country and augmenting his legions as he went. He brought over not only the piratical bands which infested the seaboard of

Kwang-tung, but even such ancient and powerful secret societies as the Triad; while two desperate women brought 4,000 warriors, all of whom bowed to his authority, and adopted his creed. Their tawdry dress, their many-coloured banners and flags, their long lank hair, lent to these predatory hordes a fierce barbaric air, so that as they passed from city to city and from province to province, armed with cutlasses and knives, the quiet, docile, clean-shorn Chinese were terror-stricken at the sight of these monsters—at these land-pirates, who robbed them of their rice-harvests and the products of their farms. A march of nearly 700 miles brought his huge army to Nanking, which fell and became the capital of the Heavenly King.

Here, under the shadow of the Porcelain Tower, he established himself in royal state. He gave to his kinsmen who had most distinguished themselves in the campaign against the reigning dynasty the titles of Wangs, or kings. There were the Chung Wang, or Faithful King; the Eastern King and the Western King; the Warrior King and the Attendant King. Many had gained for themselves nicknames, in addition to their high-sounding titles; the sobriquets of the Yellow Tiger, the One-Eyed Dog, and Cock Eye were famous among their ranks. Both titles and names alike had been won in battle, and were often the records of deeds

of valour. These kingships at last became so numerous that they numbered several hundreds, and Tien Wang, the Emperor of the Great Peace, found himself constrained to cease conferring them on his great adherents. One of the amusements of the chief, who soon developed a tyranny almost without parallel, was to kick his many wives and concubines to death. The wonder is that the Wangs, who were all desperate leaders of armies, continued their allegiance to one who never hesitated to behead them for even a trivial offence. But so it was. They believed him to be the Junior Lord, come down to earth to save the suffering Mings. One of the Wangs, more ambitious than his comrades, did venture on an occasion to assert himself —to call himself the Holy Ghost—and for this he was sent straightway to his grave. It is almost inconceivable that in this latter half of the nineteenth century such an organized imposture as this of Hung-tsue-schuen's could exist. It must not be forgotten, however, that his pseudo-religious tenets appealed to a people saturated with superstition, and that the methods he employed to impress himself upon them were of a kind singularly suited to their moods. It is not easy to give an idea of this huge harlequinade of worship and war, of which much will be said hereafter in these pages. Meanwhile, it may be well to read the impresssions of a missionary—Mr. J. L. Holmes—who

visited Nanking, and saw how these warlike devotees of the so-called Great Peace comported themselves in their palaces and the palace of their Emperor:

'At night,' says this authority, 'we witnessed their worship. It occurred at the beginning of their Sabbath, midnight of Friday. The place of worship was the Chung Wang's private audience-room. He was himself seated in the midst of his attendants—no females were present. They first sang, or rather chanted; after which a written prayer was read and burned by an officer, upon which they rose and sang again, and then separated. The Chung Wang sent for me again before he left his seat, and asked me if I understood their mode of worship. I replied that I had just seen it for the first time. He asked what our mode was. I replied that we endeavoured to follow the rules laid down in the Scriptures, and thought all departure therefrom to be erroneous. He then proceeded to explain the ground upon which they departed from this rule. The Tien Wang had been to heaven, he said, and had seen the Heavenly Father. Our revelation had been handed down for 1,800 years. They had received a new, additional revelation; and upon this they could adopt a different mode of worship. I replied that if the Tien Wang had obtained a revelation we could determine its genuineness by comparing it with the Scriptures. If they coincided, they might be parts of the same; if not, the new revelation could not be true, as God did not change. He suggested that there might be a sort of *disparagement*, which was yet appropriate, as in the Chinese garment, which is buttoned at one side. To this comparison I objected, as comparing a piece of man's work with God's work. Ours were little

and imperfect; His great and glorious. We should compare God's works with each other. The sun did not rise in the east to-day, and in the west to-morrow. Winter and summer did not exchange their respective characters. Neither would the Heavenly Father capriciously make a law at one time and contradict it at another. His Majesty seemed rather disconcerted at thus being carried out of the usual track in which he was in the habit of discoursing, and we parted, proposing to talk further upon the subject at another time.

'At daylight we started for the Tien Wang's palace. The procession was headed by a number of brilliantly coloured banners, after which followed a troop of armed soldiers; then came the Chung Wang in a large sedan, covered with yellow satin and embroidery, and borne by eight coolies; next came the foreigner on horseback, in company with the Chung Wang's chief officer, followed by a number of other officers on horseback. On our way several of the other kings who were in the city fell in ahead of us with similar retinues. Music added discord to the scene, and curious gazers lined the streets on either side, who had no doubt seen kings before, but probably never witnessed such an apparition as that . . . . . Reaching at length the palace of the Tien Wang, a large building resembling very much the best of the Confucian temples, though of much greater size than these generally are, we entered the outer gate and proceeded to a large building to the eastward of the palace proper, and called the "Morning Palace." Here we were presented to the Tsau Wang and his son, with several others. After resting a little while, during which two of the attendants testified their familiarity with, and consequent irreverence for, the royal place by con-

cluding a misunderstanding in fisticuffs, we proceeded to the audience-hall of the Tien Wang. I was here presented to the Tien Wang's two brothers, two nephews, and son-in-law, in addition to those whom I had before met at the "Morning Palace." They were seated at the entrance of a deep recess, over the entrance of which was written, "Illustrious Heavenly Door." At the end of this recess, far within, was pointed out to us his Majesty Tien Wang's seat, which was as yet vacant. The company awaited for some time the arrival of the Western King, whose presence seemed to be necessary before they could proceed with the ceremonies. That dignitary, a boy of twelve or fourteen, directly made his appearance, and entering at the "Holy Heavenly Gate," took his place with the royal group. They then proceeded with their ceremonies as follows: First they kneeled with their faces to the Tien Wang's seat and uttered a prayer to the Heavenly Brother; then kneeling with their faces in the opposite direction, they prayed to the Heavenly Father; after which they again kneeled with their faces to the Tien Wang's seat, and in like manner repeated a prayer to him. They then concluded by singing in a standing position. A roast pig and the body of a goat were lying with other articles on tables in the outer court, and a fire was kept burning on a stone altar in front of the Tien Wang's seat, in a sort of court which intervened between it and the termination of the recess leading to it. He had not yet appeared, and though all waited for him for some time after the conclusion of the ceremonies, he did not appear at all. He had probably changed his mind, concluding that it would be a bad precedent to allow a foreigner to see him without first signifying submission to him; or it may be that he did not

mean to see me after learning the stubborn nature of our principles; but, anxious to have us carry away some account of the grandeur and magnificence of his Court, had taken this mode of making an appropriate impression, leaving the imagination to supply the vacant chair which his own ample dimensions should have filled. We retired to the "Morning Palace" again, where kings, princes, foreigner, and all were called upon to ply the "nimble lads" upon a breakfast which had been prepared for us, after which we retired in the order in which we came.

'In the course of the afternoon, after our return, the Chung Wang invited me in to see him privately. I was led through a number of rooms and intervening courts into one of his private sitting-rooms, where he sat clothed loosely in white silk, with a red kerchief round his head and a jewel in front. He was seated in an easy-chair, and fanned by a pretty slipshod girl. Another similar chair was placed near him, on which he invited me to be seated, and at once began to question me about foreign machinery, etc. He had been puzzled with a map with paralled lines running each way, said to have been made by foreigners, which he asked me to explain. He then submitted to my inspection a spy-glass and a music-box, asking various questions about each, evidently supposing every foreigner to be an adept in the construction of such articles. After this he became quite familiar, and was ready to see me at any hour. At the next interview, which occurred on the day following, I referred him to various passages in the New Testament, which conflicted with the doctrines of Tien Wang. I found it impossible to gain his attention to these matters. He was ready enough to declaim in set speech about all men being brethren, but it was easy

to perceive that his religion, such as it was, had little hold upon his heart. He confessed carelessly that the revelation of Tien Wang did not agree with the Bible, but said that of Tien Wang, being later, was more authoritative. I found him but little disposed to have his faith tested, either by reason or revelation, or indeed to think about it at all when it was abstracted from public affairs.

'The two days which yet elapsed before our departure were spent mostly in conversation with various persons connected with the establishment of the Chung Wang and other kings. These conversations, informal and desultory, gave me an opportunity to ascertain something of the practical working of Hung tsue-schuen's principles upon the masses of his adherents. I could not perceive that there was any elevation of character or sentiment to distinguish them from the great mass of the Chinese population; indeed, the effect of his pretensions to a commission to "slay the imps" appears to have annihilated in their minds all consciousness of crimes committed against those who are not of their own faith. To rob and murder an adherent of the Manchou dynasty is a virtuous deed. To carry away his wife or daughter for infamous purposes, or his son to train up for the army, are all legitimate acts. We questioned some of the boys who were sent to wait upon us as to their nativity; some were from Ngang-hu-ai, some from Hupeh, some from Honan, and others from Kiang-si. Wherever their armies had overrun the country they had captured the boys and led them away with them. The large proportion of comely-looking women to be seen looking out at the doors and windows showed the summary way in which these celestial soldiers provided themselves with wives.'

Up to the year 1860 this monstrous civil war was waged solely between the followers of the Heavenly King, and the Imperial Government. There had been rumours of foreign aid being given to the one and to the other; but there was an odd prejudice in favour of Hung on account of the mad impossible Christianity of his pretensions and ambitions; a feeling prevailed that the Tai-pings might after all be in the right; and, owing to our hostile relations with the Chinese Government, our representatives refused to take arms against the rebels, though our aid was invited on the very eve of a battle between the allied forces of England and France and the army of Sankolinsin. The tactics of the Imperialist leaders had all along been to drive the rebels towards the sea. The consequence was that Shanghai and other consular ports were menaced by the insurgents, and had become, as well, the refuge of distracted and destitute peasants, whose villages were burned and whose lands were laid waste by the ruthless Tai-pings. These tactics on the part of the Imperial authorities were the worst possible, for the rebels had everything to gain from being driven towards the wealthy cities along the coast, which contained sufficient war material to supply all their armies. Before long the Chinese Government were awakened to their folly; but they nevertheless clung to their policy, for they counted on the frightened foreign

community to protect the ports, if only to save themselves and their property. Seeing, at a critical juncture, that nothing was being done, two great Chinese officials applied to the Allies for certain help. The English and French Ambassadors considered the request; and it was decided that, without taking any part in the civil contest or expressing any opinion on the rights of the contending parties, we might protect Shanghai from attack and assist the authorities in preserving tranquillity within its walls, on the ground that it was an open port, and that there was a complete community of interest between the town and the foreign settlement. In the meantime as was expected the wealthy traders of Shanghai had taken the alarm, and the more influential among them had subscribed for a foreign force to keep the enemy at bay. Two American ci-devant filibusters named Ward and Burgevine were commissioned to raise a contingent. A reward was offered to them for the capture of a place called Sung-kiang — some twenty miles from the city — held by the rebels. About a hundred seamen were got together, and Ward, who had been a sailor and had served under Walker in Nicaragua, led them to the attack, and was repulsed with considerable loss. He, however, made another attempt, and, with the help of an Imperialist force, succeeded in taking the city. Then, encouraged by the

reward he had won, and with his force augmented by a bevy of rowdies, he proceeded to make further raids on the rebels. But the Faithful King, one of the Tai-ping leaders, hearing of his people's defeat, led a new army against Ward and his 'foreign devils,' as they were termed, and drove them back into Sung-kiang; to keep Ward in durance and in check he left a part of his force before the city, and with the rest of his troops marched on Shanghai, ravaging the intervening country as he went.

But at this time the war was not to be entirely between the Imperialists and the rebels; for when the Faithful King advanced upon Shanghai, the allied French and British troops that were in the city joined the Imperialists, and drove the rebels back with heavy loss. This was on the 18th of August, 1860, and upon the following day the Faithful One renewed his attack, but was again repulsed, and had to retire to Soochow. From this place he was summoned to Nanking by the Heavenly King; and from that city in October, 1860, four great armies were sent forth under four mighty Wangs, to drive the Imperialists from the cities immediately north and south of the Yangtze river, over a district extending from Nanking to Hankow, a distance of about 400 miles. No sooner, however, had these four armies been set in motion, than the British naval Commander-in-Chief,

Admiral Sir James Hope, thought it necessary to visit those ports on the Yangtze which had been opened up to foreign trade by the Convention of Pekin. In February, 1861, therefore, the Admiral sailed up the river, and, anchoring at Nanking, entered into communication with the Heavenly King. The result of his negotiation was that an arrangement was agreed upon by which the Yangtze trade was not to be interfered with, nor was Shanghai to be in any way molested by the Armies of the Great Peace for the space of one year. The rebel leader kept his word, and during the whole of 1861 his followers were actively engaged in endeavouring to take Hankow and to re-establish themselves in the Yangtze valley. They met with constant reverses; and, after a year of defeats, were driven back into the neighbourhood of Shanghai. The Heavenly King then informed the British Admiral that he intended to attack Shanghai as soon as the year's truce had expired. Sir James Hope warned him against any such proceeding; but the warning was disregarded, and the Faithful King was ordered to march on Shanghai in January of 1862. This led to the allied forces co-operating with Ward, who was then at Sung-kiang with a thousand drilled Chinese; and it is from this that British interference in the Tai-ping Rebellion may be said to date. From February to June the allied forces

assisted Ward and the Imperialists; and in May, Captain Dew, R.N., was appointed to a naval command, and drove the Tai-pings from Ning-po. In September, Ward was killed, and Burgevine succeeded him in the command of the Ever Victorious Army; but in January, 1863, the new commander was cashiered for corrupt practices, and the British Government was formally applied to, and requested to provide the army with a captain in his stead.

CHAPTER IV.

FUSHAN—TAITSAN—QUINSAN.

The Governor-General of the Kiang Provinces was Li Futai, better known as Li-Hung-Chang—the Chinese Bismarck as he has since been called—the most famous soldier and statesman of modern China. He had been sent by Tseng-kwo-fan,* Generalissimo of the Imperialists, to Shanghai, to take the command there, and to crown his ten years' service against the rebels by saving that port from them, and so in some sort reversing the foolish policy which, as I have shown, was insisted upon at Pekin. On his arrival he was told by General Staveley that though the French and English would continue to guard the frontier up to a radius of thirty miles round Shanghai, the actual treatment of the rebellion must be given over to the Chinese; so, like a skilful commander, he at once began to train the native troops to the use of foreign arms.

* The famous Tseng-kwo-fan was the father of the even more famous Marquess Tseng.

Neither he, however, nor any other Chinese was competent to assume the command of Ward's adventurers. Burgevine, too, was wholly unsuited to the work which was now in his hands. On his arrival at Shanghai with a bodyguard of a hundred picked men, armed with rifles, he had entered the premises of a mandarin, who was the local treasurer of the Government, and demanded money for arrears of pay. This demand not being immediately complied with, Burgevine struck the treasurer with his fist, led his men into the treasury, and ordered them to carry off 40,000 dollars. For this insult the authorities, under the seal of Li-Hung-Chang, degraded him, as I have said, and dismissed him their service.

This outrage and its consequences led to a vacancy in the command of the Ever Victorious Army, and Li-Hung-Chang—always in sympathy with foreigners—at once evinced his capacity as a statesman and his understanding of the true position of affairs, by soliciting General Staveley to appoint a British officer to the post. With a kindly feeling towards the Chinese, Staveley entertained the request conditionally. It was necessary first to refer the matter to the Horse Guards: meantime he had not far to look for the right man. His choice fell on Gordon, one who had never commanded; but who above all other men had impressed those who knew him with a sense of his great abilities.

The reputation he had won before Sebastopol, and which had accompanied him into Bessarabia and Armenia, he had more than sustained before Pekin and at Shanghai. Wherever he had been he had improved his opportunities and made the most of his talents. Even now, when the tempting offer of this command was made him, such was his desire to be thoroughly competent for its duties, that instead of rushing upon the task, and trusting wholly to fortune, as so many had done before him, he modestly asked that his appointment might be deferred until he had finished the military survey of the thirty miles round Shanghai which he had in hand, on the ground that it would be of the utmost service to him on the campaign. This was conceded him, and Captain Holland, of the Marine Light Infantry, by the advice of Sir James Hope, Admiral of the naval forces in China, took temporary command.

Holland believed in himself, and with a mixed force of men, 2,500 of all arms, two pieces of ordnance, and an Imperial Brigade about 5,000 strong, he at once laid siege to the walled city of Taitsan. For information as to its defences he depended solely on the mandarins. They had assured him that the city was surrounded by a dry ditch—which proved to be a deep moat thirty yards wide—and no means of crossing it were at hand. He contrived to breach the walls. But the bamboo ladder, upon which the storming-party

managed to cross the moat, broke down; a repulse ensued under a galling fire from the walls; three hundred men and four foreign officers were killed and wounded, and the two thirty-two-pounders which had been placed 'in the open' without cover got embedded in the mud, and had to be abandoned.

This was a triumph for the Tai-pings; and how they regarded the generalship of 'Foreign Devils' will be seen from the following account of the affair, written by one of their principal Wangs:

'Oh, how we laughed, on the morning of the assault, as they advanced nearer to the creek which they brought no bridges to throw over! how we laughed as we saw the ladder they had thrown over getting weaker and weaker beneath them, and at last fall into the creek, leaving half the party on one side, and half on the other. "What general is he," cried our chief, "who sends his men to storm a city without first ascertaining that there is a moat?" "And what general is he," cried another of our leaders, "who allows a storming-party to advance without bridges? See, O chief, these unfortunates!"

'So we laughed, and so we jested, as we saw the slaves of the Tartar usurper advancing to destruction. But our chief was wroth when he saw the handful of men who had come out against him. "Do they think we are cowards, even as the impish soldiers of the mandarins," cried he, "that they thus dare to bring out hundreds against our thousands?" "Not so, O Chief," replied a valiant captain, "but they have forgotten that they had foreigners to aid them at Kah-ding

and Na-jow, Cho-lin and Wong-ka and other places in the neighbourhood of Shanghai." Loud and long was the laughter of our leader as the idea burst upon him; but his laughter soon changed to wrath at the presumption. "Arise," cried he, "O inheritors of eternal peace; arise and drive these imps from the face of our land." And we arose at his word as one man; the cry of "Blood!" was in our mouths, and the thirst for blood consumed us; we sallied forth on the "ever-victorious" troops, and behold, they retired so soon as they saw the brandishing of our spears. Many fled, flinging away their arms in their haste; their ammunition and their belts also they cast upon the ground in their fear. The impish followers of the mandarins set them the example, and many followed it. Little cared they for bridges in their haste; they scattered themselves over the face of the country, and we pursued them as they fled. There were English officers too. O recorder of events, how they ran! One of them flung away his pistol and his sword, and swam the creek in his haste. Another also lost his sword, which the Sung-kiang men picked up, and, I am told, have it now in Sung-kiang. But they needed not. We know the policy of your nation—not to attack us beyond the thirty-mile boundary, and we should not have hurt them, knowing that they only came to witness our prowess. We know likewise full well that the English *Chuntai* did wrong in overstepping the boundary, but he has suffered for it; let him rest. We thank him for the 32-pounders which he has left in our hands; and we will keep them as a memento of our victory, and will mount them on our walls as a warning to the troops of Sung-kiang never again to attack us in our stronghold. I will be just, though, and true. Many of the Sung-kiang men fought bravely, and their officers

as heroes. They tried long to carry off their two guns, but could not stand our fire. Mightily were we surprised, O recorder of events, at the conduct of the English Chuntai. Can you believe it, O recorder of events: he removed the smaller guns first, instead of leaving them to the last to protect the removal of the big ones. Then, too, were we surprised to see him leading the retreat in his boat. We know that such is the practice of the impish mandarins; but we thought that English officers always sought the post of danger. We thought, truly, that he would have brought up the rear, instead of leaving it to his second in command.

'We retired before the face of the foreigners, because we know their might; we withdrew beyond the line which they chalked out, and we will not transgress beyond it; but the country we possess will we hold, and scatter to the four winds of heaven any impish fiends who come against us. Let not the mandarin slaves think that in their service alone are foreigners employed, and that they alone reap the benefit of their warlike experience. Numbers of them have acknowledged the supremacy of our Heavenly King, and joined us in our efforts to make Great Peace prevail. Many were in Taitsan, and a Frenchman pointed the gun which carried death into the ranks of our foes. O recorder of events, we, too, have disciplined troops; and we, too, have European firearms, as the imps found to their cost. They have essayed our might, and have experienced the strength of our arm. Let them rest in Sung-kiang. They thought they could take Nanking, but they failed before Taitsan.'

This defeat—the greatest triumph the Tai-pings had yet attained—showed that the Ever-Victorious Army,

as it was obligingly called, still wanted a leader. At this juncture Gordon left his survey unfinished, and took command of it at Sung-kiang on the 25th of March. From this time it lacked a leader no longer —a leader, too, who could perpetuate and justify its name.

'I am afraid you will be much vexed at my having taken the command of the Sung-kiang force, and that I am now a mandarin,' he says, writing home on the 24th March, 1863. 'I have taken the step on consideration. I think that anyone who contributes to putting down this rebellion fulfils a humane task, and I also think tends a great deal to open China to civilization. I will not act rashly, and I trust to be able soon to return to England; at the same time I will remember your and my father's wishes, and endeavour to remain as short a time as possible. I can say that if I had not accepted the command I believe the force would have been broken up and the rebellion gone on in its misery for years. I trust this will not now be the case, and that I may soon be able to comfort you on this subject. You must not fret on this matter; I think I am doing a good service. . . . I keep your likeness before me, and can assure you and my father that I will not be rash, and that as soon as I can conveniently, and with due regard to the object I have in view, I will return home.'

There was a great deal of eagerness to avenge the defeat at Taitsan. But it is clear, judging from what followed, that Gordon, with his concentrated experience

of war, listened to no one : he looked only to the grand result, and exercised his military genius in determining at once on the best and surest means of striking the rebellion at its very heart, and restoring as speedily as possible the provinces to the Imperial power. He had learned enough from the past history of the war to see that the petty operations of defence and skirmish against the Tai-pings — such as clearing Shanghai from their raids over a circle of thirty miles radius, and attacking strongholds like Taitsan, with doubtful and often disastrous results—were merely calculated to prolong the rebellion. He could see, too—what was even more to the purpose—that by rapidly changing his ground, and striking sudden blows at points where he was least expected, he would not only hearten and inspire his followers, but constrain the rebels in all their holds to adopt an attitude of defence, and leave them neither time nor courage to molest Shanghai, or threaten Imperial ports.

His mind once made up, it was not many days ere he was steaming into the Yangtze estuary towards Fushan, which lies on its southern bank. He carried with him some 200 of his artillery, also as many of his infantry — about 1,000 in all — as the two steamers he had at his command would transport. An Imperialist force was entrenched not far

from Fushan; and, under cover of this he landed unopposed, though a large body of Tai-pings watched his movements in the open field. On the 3rd of April he reached Fushan with all his force, and went at once to its attack.

The little place had a history. It had long been a haunt of pirates; but it had submitted to the rebel arms, had freed itself, and had been recaptured and garrisoned with Tai-pings. It was important as commanding the river as far as Chanzu, a loyal city ten miles inland, hard pressed by a Tai-ping force. Chanzu, too, had its history; and it is thus told by Mr. Wilson:

'The garrison of Chanzu itself had a curious story to tell. They had all been rebels, but had suddenly transferred the town and their services to the other side. Their chief, Lo Kuo-chung, had persuaded them to shave their heads and declare for the Imperialist cause early in the year, and this they did in conjunction with the garrison of Fushan; but no sooner had they done so than, to their dismay, the Faithful King came down upon them with a large force, took Fushan, and laid siege to them, trying to overcome them by various kinds of assault and surprise. He brought against them the two 32-pounders which had been recovered after having been taken at Taitsan, and partially breached the wall. He offered any terms to the soldiers if they would come over; and, in order to show his great success, sent in the heads of three European officers who had been killed at Taitsan. Lo,

in these trying circumstances, had been obliged to do a good deal of beheading in order to keep his garrison staunch; but he, and probably most of his followers, felt they had committed too unpardonable a sin ever to thrust themselves again into Tai-ping hands.'

The motive of Gordon's advance on Chanzu is clear. Its object was twofold: to carry the war into the enemy's own country, and to relieve a suffering garrison in danger of falling a second time into the merciless hands of the rebel king. Gordon lost no time in planting his guns among the deserted ruins, which afforded excellent cover during the bombardment. He opened fire from his 32-pounder and from four 12-pounder howitzers, on a strong stockade built by the rebels on the left bank of the creek towards Chanzu. The fire of another 12-pounder howitzer was directed at the same time against a second stockade on the opposite bank. The creek was bridged with boats; and, after three hours' bombardment, a storming-party, under Captain Belcher, advanced to the assault, and carried the position. The rebels, receiving large reinforcements from the direction of Chanzu, then showed so threatening a front that Gordon drew into his stockade for the night. Next morning, however, the enemy was abandoning his positions and retreating towards Soochow, a great rebel centre on the Grand Canal, lying inland about thirty miles to the south-west.

This vigorous action, the work of a single day, enabled Gordon with equal celerity to relieve Chanzu itself. As far as that place, the country was now open along both sides of the creek, and Gordon's force, together with a large body of mandarin troops, made their way unmolested up to its gates. Its crowded population, swelled by multitudes of refugees from the surrounding villages, were rejoiced at their relief. The Mandarins received Gordon and his officers in state. 'I saw the young rebel chiefs who had come over,' he says;' 'they are very intelligent, and splendidly dressed in silks, and with big pearls in their caps. The head man is about thirty-five years old; he looked worn to a thread with anxiety. He was so very glad to see me, and chin-chinned most violently, regretting his inability to give me a present, which I told him was not the custom with us people.' The young General left three hundred men to garrison a stockade, and returned inland by the river to his headquarters, at Sung-kiang.

When Gordon took on himself the command of his little army he found its discipline extremely bad. This he almost instantly improved; he had the great commander's capacity of making men both love and obey him. Nothing at this time could have gratified him more than the circumstance that on his appointment, several applications were made by British

officers to General Brown (who had succeeded General Staveley) for leave to join Gordon's force, and enter the Chinese service under him. These would have been no doubt more numerous but for the terms of the Order in Council placing such officers on half-pay. A certain number of permits were given, subject to Gordon's approval. One of the officers who thus joined the force, and the only one who served from first to last, was Surgeon Moffit, of the 67th Regiment, who proved himself to be of invaluable aid. So, surrounded by his brother officers, who knew his high qualities, and greatly strengthened, Gordon was able to purge his staff of incompetent men. The general confidence had been fully justified and confirmed by his brilliant march on Fushan and Chanzu, an achievement which won him, by Imperial decree, the grade of Tsung-Ping, or Brigadier-General.

At Sung-kiang he went at once to work upon his army and his plans. He took forthwith a high place in the estimation both of his men and of Li Hung-Chang. The latter, a Mandarin of the Yellow Button, he treated loyally, and without the aristocratic airs which had rendered his predecessors offensive to native authority. When Burgevine was intriguing at Pekin to get reinstated in his command, Li had warmly advocated Gordon's appointment and Burgevine's intrigues had thus been brought to an end. After being

degraded and dismissed, that American adventurer had gone to the capital, and it was made to appear for the moment that Prince Kung himself was in his favour. This arose out of two very curious circumstances: one was that the American Minister warmly advocated Burgevine's cause, and gave a history of his past career which, however, did not coincide with facts; the other, that our own Ambassador, Sir Frederick Bruce, was under the diplomatic feeling that it would be discourteous to refuse his support to the claims of a man about whom he knew nothing, save that he had impressed him favourably. Under these circumstances Prince Kung had played a very pleasant part by appearing to listen to the Ambassadors, at the same time stating that the final settlement of the matter rested with Li, the Governor of the Province, and that it should be formally referred to him. Burgevine's conduct, infamous in many ways, and crowned by his assault on the treasury, had made, as Prince Kung well knew, his pardon impossible. Li would not consent to his reinstalment on any terms whatever, and in this way the filibuster's career was broken and ended.

After all this it will easily be understood that Li was anxious to forward Gordon's views on his return to headquarters. In truth, there was much to be done. The young Captain was determined upon reorganizing

his little army on the English model; and his first move in this direction was to establish regular pay on a liberal scale, and to abolish the abominable practice of rewards for captures. Under Burgevine and Ward it had been customary to bargain with the troops for the performance of special service: they on their side were to do the work, and when it was done they were to have as much as they could make by looting the fallen city. Gordon saw at once that it was impossible to maintain the morality of a body of men under circumstances such as these; and by securing them a regular fee for their services, and absolutely breaking them of the habit of plunder, he made the work of re-organization on which he had resolutely set his heart a mere matter of time.

His force was from 3,000 to 4,000 strong. It consisted of five or six infantry regiments, four siege batteries, and two field-batteries. Its men were, for the most part, armed with smooth-bore muskets, while a chosen few were entrusted with Enfield rifles; the uniforms consisted of dark serge, with green turbans. Its Colonels or Lieutenant-Colonels were to receive from £75 to £85 a month, while the pay of Majors, Captains, and Adjutants was in a diminishing ratio between these sums and the pay of its Lieutenants, which was fixed at £30 a month. The pay of its privates, who were all Chinese, was from £4 10s.

downwards, according to grade, certain rations being allowed while in the field. The pay of the Commander himself was high. 'It is £260 per month, or £3,120 per annum,' says Gordon; 'but that is a minor consideration.'

It is to be remarked that the commissioned officers were all foreigners—Englishmen, Americans, Germans, Frenchmen, and Spaniards; and that, as a rule, they were brave, reckless, quick in adapting themselves to circumstances, steady in action, but greatly given to quarrelling among themselves.

Payment was made monthly by a Chinese official of high civil rank named Kah, a good man of business and very popular. He was well educated, honest, and of pleasing manners, and he paid the force in the presence of the Commander. The monthly cost to the Government was from fourteen to twenty-six thousand pounds, and it is said that the men were never kept in arrears more than ten days. The army had a uniform which the men at first greatly objected to, as it exposed them to the satire of their countrymen, who called them 'Imitation Foreign Devils.' Gordon's purpose was to make the rebels imagine that they had foreign soldiers to fight. When the troops became victorious their uniform was a source of pride to them; they would have strongly objected to change it for a native dress. Woo, the Tautai of Shanghai, was so full of the idea

that the very foot-prints of the disciplined Chinese impressed the rebels with fear, that he purchased, for general distribution, some thousands of pairs of European boots, such as were worn by Gordon's troops, that their marks might be everywhere visible.

But Gordon did more than feed and pay and discipline his men. He provided himself with a heavy force of artillery, amply supplied with ammunition, and with every means of transport in the way of gun-carriages and boats. He had mantlets to protect his gunners; a pontoon equipment, bamboo ladders, planks for short tramways, and many other provisions for rapid movement in a country abounding in water. And he trained up his men in the drill of her Majesty's army. He practised his artillery both in breaching fortifications and in covering storming-parties. He instituted a system of punishments for the native force, and one for the foreign officers, who were subject even to instant dismissal, but this only by the order of the Commander himself. With an army thus organized, and with a flotilla of steamers and Chinese gunboats, he was soon prepared again to take the field.

Nearly to the north of Shanghai, and of Gordon's headquarters at Sung-kiang, lies Taitsan, from which a road runs south-westward through Quinsan and Soochow. These were then three rebel centres, of which the last was the chief. It was the natural

capital of the country which was to be the seat of war. Towards the district of which it was the chief place Gordon, before the end of April, proceeded with his force, but without communicating to anyone which of the centres was the aim of his first onset. It was presently seen that his object was to reduce Quinsan, which was of the greatest strategical importance in relation both to Soochow and Taitsan. The approaches to Soochow on the eastern side met at the city; Taitsan was equally dependent upon it; it was also the rebel arsenal and shot manufactory. As Gordon was making straight for his mark, the news reached him that the commander of Taitsan had made proposals of surrender to Governor Li; that accordingly an Imperialist column had been marched to occupy the place; that the men so sent had been treacherously made prisoners, and two hundred beheaded. He therefore abandoned his scheme, and moved swiftly upon Taitsan.

This was a great undertaking, and full of peril. The place was garrisoned by 10,000 men, of whom 2,000 were picked braves, with several English, French, and American renegades serving at the guns; while his own force numbered only 3,000 of all arms. That, however, mattered little to him. He laid siege to the city forthwith. He took some outlying stockades, and established his army in the west suburb, about 1,500 yards from the gate; he then seized upon the

two bridges of the main canal. Working round the town, and keeping out of gunshot, he captured some small forts which protected the Quinsan road, and so cut the two centres asunder. At a distance of 600 yards from the walls he placed his guns in position, each covered with a portable wooden mantlet, and flanked with riflemen. Thus prepared, he advanced with his artillery to within 100 yards, when he opened a scorching fire upon the battlements, rapidly overpowering the fire of the enemy, which was brisk, but not as yet damaging. He bridged the moat with gunboats from headquarters. In two hours he breached the walls, and his stormers crossed to the attack. Suddenly the wall was manned; a tremendous fire was poured down upon the heads of the column; the bridge was pelted with fire-balls; and, in the confusion, one of the gunboats was captured. Still, Captain Bannen gallantly led on his column, and succeeded in mounting the breach. The enemy, headed by the foreigners in his service, met the assault with spears; and the stormers, after a short and bloody conflict, were compelled to retire. Gordon now cannonaded the breach for twenty minutes, over the heads of his stormers. They mounted it once more, when the energy of those in front, and the impetus of the men in the rear, broke through all obstacles, and the breach was crowned. All resistance ceased, the city was captured, and the

enemy fled in the utmost confusion, the men trampling each other to death in their eagerness to escape pursuit.

Gordon's loss, in this brief and desperate struggle, was unusually heavy, amounting to between eight and nine per cent. of his force. Among the dead was the brave Captain Bannen, who led the assault, and several other officers. Of the column, whose treacherous capture had induced Gordon to turn aside towards Taitsan, 300 remained alive in the city, with two Mandarins. On the Tai-ping side the loss had been less heavy.

The following is Gordon's own account of the affair, in a letter to his mother, written on his return to head-quarters:

'I left Sung-kiang with some 3,000 men, on 24th April, and intended to attack Quinsan, a large town between Taitsan and Soochow. However, before I had arrived at the place, intelligence reached me that the Tai-ping forces at Taitsan, who professed to come over to the Imperialists, had treacherously seized the party sent to take possession. I immediately changed my route, and marched on Taitsan, attacked the two large stockades on one day, and the town on the next. The rebels made a good fight; but it was no use, and the place fell. Taitsan was very important, and its capture well merited, after the treachery shown by the head chief, who was wounded in the head. It opens out a large tract of country; and the Chinese generals were delighted, and have said all sorts of civil things about the force. I am now a Tsung Ping

Mandarin (which is the second highest grade), and have acquired a good deal of influence. I do not care about that over-much. I am quite sure I was right in taking over the command, as you would say if you saw the ruthless character of the rebels. Taitsan is a large place, and was strongly held. It is a Fu, or capital city.'

Seven among the prisoners taken later by the Imperialists were condemned to the punishment of slow and ignominious death. The execution took place near Waikong. They were tied up and exposed to view for about five hours previous to decapitation, with an arrow or two forced through the skin in various parts of the body, and a piece of skin flayed from one arm. This business—of which Gordon was wholly innocent, which was the work of Mandarins quite independent of his command, and against which he protested in the strongest terms—is noticed in connection with the victory at Taitsan, because it gave rise to a curious piece of fiction, which—first promulgated in China, and, through the instrumentality of an English Bishop whose see was Victoria, handed on to Earl Russell, then Foreign Secretary—took, through the Press, a strong hold on the sentimental section of the British public. In excuse it was stated that the unlucky seven were special offenders; that they had been guilty of that act of bloody treachery which sacrificed the lives of half the Chinese column entrapped in Taitsan; and that they

had no claim to be treated as prisoners of war. It was added that according to Chinese notions the punishment inflicted on them was extremely mild. The account of these executions as above given was strictly verified by General Brown, who commanded her Majesty's forces in China. When he had ascertained the facts of the case, he at once told the Futai, Li, that if any similar cases were reported to him he should withdraw his troops, and cease to encourage the Imperialist cause.

But the account did not seem sufficiently horrible for the public, and fiction was made stranger than truth—at any rate, more terrible. The story, communicated to the Press under a string of plausible signatures (such as 'Eye-Witness,' 'Justice and Mercy,' etc.), was that, from personal observation, the prisoners were tortured with the most refined cruelty; that arrows had been forcibly driven into their heads, breasts, stomachs, and so forth; and that strips of flesh had been hacked from all parts of them. The colonial Bishop above alluded to gave a private interview to the 'Eye-Witness' of the legend, and liked his story so well that he sent it at once to the Foreign Secretary, though by communicating with General Brown, which would have been usual, he might have got at the facts. He himself preferred, however, to address Lord Russell, to whom he

stated that there was no doubt as to the truth of his report.

At this time there was a brisk business done in China by persons who sat down to invent stories of Imperialist cruelties for the Press. These dismal epics, always about 'unmentionable atrocities,' were, on examination, found to be false; but, unfortunately, they reached the sentimentalists at home before their contradictions. They thus accomplished all the mischief that was desired, doing not a little momentary harm to Gordon's position and the cause that he had espoused. On this subject Gordon wrote a letter somewhat later to the *Shanghai Shipping News*, which runs thus:

'*June 15th*, 1863.

'I am of belief that the Chinese of this force are quite as merciful in action as the soldiers of any Christian nation could be; and, in proof of this, can point to over 700 prisoners, taken in the last engagement (Quinsan), who are now in our employ. Some have entered our ranks, and done service against the rebels since their capture. But one life has been taken out of this number, and that one was a rebel who tried to induce his comrades to fall on the guard, and who was shot on the spot. It is a great mistake to imagine that the men of this force are worthless. They will, in the heat of action, put their enemies to death, as the troops of any nation would do; but when the fight is over, they will associate as freely together as if they had never

fought. . . . If "Observer" and "Eye-Witness," with their friend "Justice and Mercy," would come forward and communicate what they know, it would be far more satisfactory than writing statements of the nature of those alluded to by the Bishop of Victoria. And if anyone is under the impression that the inhabitants of the rebel districts like their rebel masters, he has only to come up here to be disabused of his idea. I do not exaggerate when I say that upwards of 1,500 rebels were killed in their retreat from Quinsan by the villagers, who rose *en masse*.'

It could hardly be expected that the introduction of English discipline into a Chinese army, officered by so many nationalities, could be immediately successful, though whatever Gordon once determined on he always ended by accomplishing. His soldiers at Taitsan had been guilty of plunder, which was contrary to his articles of war; but the moment after the splendid victory they had won for him, and the heavy losses they had sustained, was scarcely the time for punishment. Punished, however, they were, in being marched off to the siege of Quinsan before opportunity of selling their loot was allowed them. There Gordon ordered the Mandarins to front the walls with strong stockades, and man them with their own soldiers; while, on his side, he took back his troops to Sung-kiang to be reorganized. He then issued a general order, thanking the officers and men for their gallantry at Taitsan. He added, at the same time, that

he was compelled to find fault with his officers for their laxity of discipline; and to improve the force in this respect, he filled the places of those who had been killed, or who had resigned, by certain officers from her Majesty's 99th Regiment, then quartered at Shanghai, who had been allowed to voluntcer for the service.

He was now ready again to advance on Quinsan when a new difficulty arose. He had found it necessary to place over the commissariat and the military stores an officer of rank, who might speak with authority to the majors in command of the different regiments, who were apt to be troublesome in the matter of rations. To this post accordingly he appointed the Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Cooksley, of the English army, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. This met with a violent opposition from his majors, which threatened to pass into open mutiny. Hardly was the force under marching orders for Quinsan when they all requested an interview with their commander, at which they complained of the appointment, impudently insisting that they should receive the same rank and pay as the new Lieutenant-Colonel. Gordon refused point-blank, and they retired to send in their resignations, with a request that these should be at once accepted, but that they should be allowed to serve on the pending expedition. Gordon accepted

their resignations, and declined their proffered service. The force was to march at daybreak the next morning, and as late as 8 a.m. Gordon's body-guard only had fallen in. The officers in command came to report that none of their men would move. At this juncture the majors, finding that there was only one commander in that army, thought better of their conduct, and submitted.

Thereupon Gordon started, with 600 artillery and 2,300 infantry, to the attack of Quinsan. There he found the Imperialist force, which he had left stockaded before the place under General Ching, in some peril, for the Tai-pings were gradually encompassing it at the East Gate. At this point Gordon attacked, and drove the enemy towards the West Gate. They numbered about 12,000; a very large force was encamped within the walls, which were five miles round. The stone forts in the neighbourhood were in the enemy's hands. As I have shown, this stronghold was of the utmost strategical importance. Not only would its possession enable Gordon to hold the conquests he had already effected; it was also the key to Soochow, which, once reduced, would restore the eastern half of the rebel territory to the Imperial Government. The aspect it presented was that of an isolated hill within the city walls, with a pagoda at the top; while in front was an open plain. Every

manœuvre of the attacking force could be distinctly seen, and two or three guns placed on the spurs of the hill would have made it a perfect citadel. Men were stationed on the high ground to telegraph all they saw to their commander, a skilful chief named Moh Wang; and in addition to all these qualities of defence, a ditch more than forty yards wide surrounded the city.

Gordon was not long in discovering that Quinsan, admirably situated as it was, had one weak spot. This suggested a scheme of operations which speedily led to its downfall. He saw that the only road between Quinsan and Soochow, two places all-important to each other, ran between a lake—that of Yansing—and a chain of large creeks widening out here and there into small lakes; and he at once concluded that by bringing an armed steamer to bear upon it he could cut off all communication. Accordingly, after investing the city with his own force and 7,000 Imperialists, to prevent the retreat of the enemy upon Chanzu, which he held in the north, and on Soochow along the narrow way leading to it from the West Gate, he ordered up his little steamer, the *Hyson*, with its guns protected by iron mantlets.

It was the 30th of May, and at dawn the steamer was under weigh, with 300 picked riflemen of the disciplined corps, accompanied by field artillery in boats, and with about fifty small gunboats—eighty sail in all

—with large white sails and variously coloured flags. On reconnoitring the country, he found that the road could be cut at Chunye, a village eight miles from Quinsan, and the key to the city. To reach this point, it was necessary for him to make a twenty miles' detour by water through the country held by the enemy. This was easily done; and the rebel garrison in the Chunye stockades was surprised and captured without the loss of a man. Leaving his 300 riflemen at Chunye, and the main body of his force at the East Gate of Quinsan, Gordon manned the *Hyson* only with her crew, well armed, under the command of Captain Davidson, an American of the greatest experience, ability and tact, and proceeded to reconnoitre the country towards Soochow. Davidson had not gone far when he fell in with a large body of Tai-pings marching to reinforce Quinsan, little dreaming that they should meet an enemy by these solitary waters. The steamer opened fire upon them with murderous effect, leaving them no alternative but to retreat along the canal, of which Gordon was now master. The steamer followed the flying mass of men, who became jammed together upon this single road in fearful confusion. What increased this disorder to the utmost was that the retreating body met fresh reinforcements coming up, with whom they became inextricably mixed, the whole mass remaining completely at the

steamer's mercy. In her progress the *Hyson* came to a bridge, and fears were entertained that she could not pass it. Its arch, however, proved sufficiently high to let the funnel through, and she continued her cruise at easy speed. At intervals on either bank of the canal stockades had been erected by the Tai-pings, as well as strong stone forts. On the *Hyson* firing a few shots, these were evacuated, and the fugitives were pursued. In this manner all the fortified posts were silenced, and Gordon steamed up to the very walls of Soochow, which was to be the next stronghold to fall. It was one of the boldest and most successful feats of the campaign; and thenceforward the name of Gordon struck terror into the hearts of the lieges of the Great Peace.

The steamer returned during the night, and reached Chunye at three in the morning. It found the 300 riflemen in a state of great alarm: the rebel garrison of Quinsan, 7,000 strong, were trying to make their escape along the road to Soochow. The *Hyson* was again brought into action, driving back the panic-stricken rebels up to the walls of the city, and repulsing every advance. The crowd of desperate Tai-pings was so great, that had they been well commanded they could have swept the Ever-Victorious Army from the face of the earth. The Imperialists themselves, sur-

rounded by the enemy, were given over to terror, and were beginning to abandon their gunboats, when the arrival of the *Hyson* changed the aspect of affairs. By firing into the Quinsan garrison she obliged it to retire, with great slaughter. The shelling went on till half-past two in the morning, and, at a later hour, the force which had been left at the East Gate entered Quinsan unopposed.

During this series of engagements the number of Tai-pings met and dealt with could not have been less than 15,000. Of these 5,000 were either shot or drowned, or afterwards murdered by the villagers, who had suffered the utmost cruelty at their hands, and who rose *en masse* against them. Gordon had made it a condition with the Imperialists that there should be no barbarity nor decapitation of prisoners, but that these should be treated as having surrendered to a British officer. The effect of this was to turn enemies into friends, and greatly to increase the strength of the disciplined force. About 2,000 prisoners were taken, 700 of whom then entered the ranks of the Ever-Victorious Army. In fact the whole garrison of Quinsan was lost to the rebels. The casualties on Gordon's side were only two killed and five drowned. The prisoners taken were very fine, big men. Most of them had been impressed by the enemy.

Here is a hurried letter, written by Gordon after the capture of Quinsan, which will give some idea of the state of things:

'The rebels certainly never got such a licking before, and I think that there will not be much more severe fighting, as we have such immense advantages in the country in the way of steamers. Quinsan is a large city 4½ miles round, and has a hill in the centre some 600 feet high, from which the flat country around can be seen for upwards of 50 miles. It is a wonderful country for creeks and lakes, and very rich. My occupying this city enables the Imperial Government to protect an enormous district rich in corn, etc., and the people around are so thankful for their release that it is quite a pleasure. They were in a desperate plight before our arrival, as their way lay between the rebels and Imperialists; but they had the sharpness to have two head men or chiefs in each village—one was Imperialist and the other a rebel; these paid the various taxes to both sides. In order to put you *au fait* as to my position, I must tell you something perhaps egotistical; but I suppose you want to hear what is the case. The Governor of the Province, Prince Kung, and nearly all the Mandarins are extremely satisfied with my appointment. I rejoice in the rank of Tsung-Ping or Red Button Mandarin, but I do not wear the dress as you may suppose. They write me very handsome letters, and are very civil in every way. I like them, but they require a great deal of tact, and getting in a rage with their apathy is detrimental, so I put up with it. I have no doubt of my having been able to

take Soochow the other day, if the Mandarins had been able to take advantage of our success. . . . You may hear of cruelties being committed, do not believe them. We took nearly 800 prisoners, and they have some of them entered my body guard and fought since against their old friends the rebels. If I had time I could tell such extraordinary stories of the way men from distant provinces meet one another, and the way villagers recognise in our ranks old rebels who have visited their villages for plunder; but I really have no time for it. I took a Mandarin, who had been a rebel for three years, and have him now; he has a bullet in his cheek, which he received when fighting against the rebels. The rebels I took into my guard were snake flag-bearers of head chiefs, and they are full of the remarks of their old masters. The snake-flags are the marks of head men in both armies. Whenever they are seen there is a chief present. When they go, you know the rebels will retire. At Taitsan the snake-flags remained till the last, and this accounted for a very severe fight. The rebel Wangs or kings knew that "a new English *piecée* had come when Fushan was taken, but did not expect him at Taitsan." Some of the reports spread are most amusing; one is that "the rebels gave me £2,000 not to attack Quinsan" when I advanced on that place after the capture of Taitsan. All the Mandarins have heard of this; but it must have slightly upset their story when we came up again against Quinsan. Bu Wang and ten other Wangs were drowned in the retreat; the former was head man of Soochow, and wrote a very important letter to General Staveley saying we were a nation of traders, and that his armies were as sand on seashore. I never did think the rebels were as strong as people said; they do not number many fighting men.

Chung Wang, the Faithful King, is away, and is said not to intend returning to Soochow. The Soochow people have removed their wives and property to the lakes behind Soochow; but I think the Wangs will be sadly put out when they see the three steamers we have in the lakes, which I hope they will do shortly.

'Knowledge of the country is everything, and I have studied it a great deal. Chanzu is within forty miles. I have been several times to see the city; it now feels quite relieved at the capture of Quinsan. The horror of the rebels at the steamer is very great; when she whistles they cannot make it out. I suppose Sherard Osborne will be out in a mail or two, but his steamers will draw too much water for these creeks and lakes. We have several personal servants of the Bu Wang among the prisoners; they of course can retail their masters' remarks on the past affairs, and are very amusing. They issued a proclamation ordering powder to be put under the steamer, and for her to be thus blown up. The query was, Who should do it? which was not answered. This place is much more healthy than Shanghai. I wish I could send you the Chinese letters I receive; some are very quaint, but cleverly written. I dare say I shall be loudly attacked by Colonel Sykes, etc., in the House of Commons. I always after a fight write a sort of memorandum on it, and send it to the English general.

'I have some four English officers with me; we wear anything we can get, and the men are almost in rags. General Staveley will tell you about the rabble. As you say, the pay is not my motive. I really do think I am doing a good service in putting down this rebellion, and so would anyone if he saw the delight

of the villagers at getting out of their oppressors' hands.

'Since the capture of Quinsan we have only been out on small scouting expeditions from one of which we returned on Saturday, having driven the rebels out of their stockades 1,200 yards from Soochow. Having to move our head quarters has caused a good deal of work, and this is only just completed.'

Gordon had seen with the intuition of a true general that Quinsan was the key to his future military operations. It was now within gunshot of his little war steamer, with her 32-pounder, from every side, and he determined to make it his head-quarters. There the men would be more under his control than at Sung-kiang, where they had been in a measure demoralized by the lax systems and the old traditions of Ward and Burgevine. By the mere fact of their presence they paralyzed the Tai-pings, and restored the peasantry to confidence. But when this change of head-quarters was communicated to the troops, it went sufficiently against the grain of the rowdy class of officers and the Chinese rank and file to make them imagine once more that they must have a hand in determining what was right and wrong. At Sung-kiang they could dispose of their loot, of which, all regulations to the contrary, they doubtless had plenty on hand. Thus it came to pass that a mutinous spirit was again

aroused. The artillery refused to fall in, and threatened to blow the officers to pieces, both European and Chinese. The intimation of this serious mutiny was conveyed to Gordon in a written proclamation, and he at once took measures that showed it was no easy task to shake him in his absolute command. Convinced that the non-commisioned officers were at the bottom of the affair, he called them up and asked who wrote the proclamation and why the men would not fall in? They had not the courage to tell the truth, and professed ignorance on both points. With quiet determination Gordon then told them that one in every five would be shot, an announcement which they received with groans. During this manifestation, the Commander, with great shrewdness, determined in his own mind that the man whose groans were the most emphatic and prolonged was the ringleader. This man was a corporal: Gordon approached him, dragged him out of the rank with his own hand, and ordered two of the infantry standing by to shoot him on the spot. The order was instantly obeyed. Gordon then sent the remaining non-commissioned officers into confinement for one hour, with the assurance that within that time, if the men did not fall in, and if the name of the writer of the proclamation was not given up, every fifth man among them would be shot. This brought them to their senses. The files fell in;

the writer's name was disclosed. Gordon had done justice to him some hours before: it was the loud-voiced corporal.

Troubles of this sort were not the only ones with which the young captain had at this time to contend. In General Ching he found a difficult and expensive coadjutor—a man eager to obtain credit with his own Government, sometimes by taking steps contrary to Gordon's advice, at others by showing his jealousy of the Englishman's successes. Thus, Gordon's modes of reducing Quinsan he visited with complete disapproval, writing to his colleague Li that if he had had artillery at the East Gate he could himself have taken the city by storm. Just now his anger made itself manifest in a manner altogether intolerable. Of set purpose, without doubt, some of his gun-boats opened fire on 150 men of the Ever-Victorious Army under Majors Kirkham and Lowden. He affected to treat the matter as a jest. He was forcibly informed that it was nothing of the kind, but he protested his ignorance of the flag on which his troops had fired. This gave rise to a correspondence between Gordon and Li, and led to Gordon's starting for the scene of action, determined upon fighting Ching as well as the Rebels, if that general should permit his sense of humour to get the better of him again. Then Mr. McCartney was sent up by Li

to arrange matters, and a humble apology was wrested from Ching; in this way the difficulty was arranged.

And now arose another danger. Burgevine, smarting under the disgrace of his dismissal, was enlisting rowdies and renegades for sinister purposes of his own, and service with the armies of the Rebel King. He had some influence still with men who had served under him; they admired his system of plunder and his desperate methods. His present movement, therefore, was alarming; and it unsettled the minds of some of Gordon's foreign officers. Their discontent became apparent just as the commander was starting for Wokong, with a view to the destruction of Soochow. The artillery officers, unwilling to serve under Major Tapp, a new commander imposed upon them by their general, while concealing their ringleaders in the old-fashioned formula of a round-robin, refused to accompany the expedition. Gordon had not the power to shoot an officer, but he had all the inclination to make an example of one or two. He therefore left them to their own devices, and by his personal influence collected men to serve the guns and to get the artillery started without the officers. At dusk, however a letter came from the offenders, begging that their conduct might

be overlooked. This, as their place could not be effectively supplied, was granted; and, after all, they were gallant men, who had evinced much ability, and were quick in acquiring a knowledge of the country.

CHAPTER V.

BURGEVINE BECOMES A WANG.

At this time the reduction of Soochow, the capital of the province, was the great object of the Imperial Government. There was much confusion of tongues, and much darkening of counsel, over the matter among the Imperial captains. Gordon had, however, his own particular idea as to the ways and means by which the city should be taken, and he was not long in putting it into practice. Soochow, the famous City of Pagodas, is situate on the Grand Canal, and, the centre of a splendid system of water-ways, is by water approachable on every side. By water, therefore, and from every side, did Gordon determine on attacking it: to isolate it from all possible assistance, to cut and master all its communications and approaches. Ten miles south of it lies Kahpoo, where the rebels had two strong forts. These it was of especial importance to take; first, because they secured a good junction between the Grand Canal and the Taho, a lake some fifty miles

across; and next, because they commanded the direct road from Soochow to the Tai-ping cities of the south. At Kahpoo, therefore, and at Wokong, three miles south of Kahpoo, and like it a key to the rebel positions, did Gordon resolve to strike a first blow.

With about 2,200 men, infantry and artillery, in boats, with the armed steamers *Firefly* and *Cricket*, he stormed Kahpoo, and next day advanced upon Wokong. On his march he came upon a rebel fort which had been left unoccupied. The Tai-pings, seeing the approach of the enemy, made a rush for the abandoned hold; and Gordon at once pushed forward his 4th and 6th Regiments to cut them off. They got in first; but so close was the race that the 6th Regiment entered almost on their heels, and drove them out, and not without loss. Leaving the 6th in occupation, Gordon went on his way, took certain other stockades which commanded Wokong, and by ten o'clock that evening had beleaguered it on every side. The panic-stricken garrison made some futile attempts to force a passage, but was soon compelled to surrender. The leader himself, Yang Wang, had escaped the night before. But 4,000 prisoners were taken, among whom were many chiefs, including the second in command. On the march back to Quinsan, Gordon, finding that at Kahpoo

there were not sufficient men to hold the stockades, resolved to remain there himself with 100 of the Ningpo battalion and a good supply of ammunition.

In the midst of these successes, Gordon had much to disturb that equanimity which is essential to a commander. In the first place, his colleague, Ching, had arrived, and was anxious to get hold of the prisoners, and turn them into soldiers. Some 1,500 were given up to him, under his promise that they should receive good treatment. It was not long, however, before Gordon heard that five had been beheaded. He saw that it was useless to protest against these abominable proceedings. The non-payment of his force, too, preyed heavily on his mind. Heartily sick of the business, he determined to throw up his command; and to this end he left for Shanghai.

A man who had proved himself to be possessed of the highest military instincts, who had succeeded in all his undertakings, who had exposed himself to so many dangers, deserved the ungrudging support of the Government whose cause he had adopted, even as he deserved the affection of an army he had led from victory to victory. Nevertheless, some of his officers were disaffected towards him, because he insisted on the maintenance of discipline, while his troops regarded him with disfavour because he steadily refused to gratify their lust of plunder. Indeed,

the capture of Quinsan, which would have set a European force on fire with ardour and confidence, was followed by the desertion of nearly half the Ever-Victorious Army; so that Gordon had been compelled to recruit from the rebel prisoners, who, fortunately, proved much better men than the deserters. Moreover, on one ground and another, many influential persons in his own country were urging him to resign. Had the Chinese Government frankly supported him in any measure proportionate to the dictates of their own interests, he certainly would not have entertained the thought of abandoning his command; for he perceived the difference it would make to the people and the country if he left this iniquitous rebellion to drift back into its former triumph, and if he left it crushed and broken beyond the power of revival.

Governor Li, who presently became his warm friend and admirer, and who has remained so to this day, had not at that time learned to appreciate his great and commanding qualities. He had probably never seen a type of complete disinterestedness before, so that he was naturally slow to acknowledge Gordon, whom he had known but a few months. The foreigners who had hitherto served in the force had been governed only by a spirit of rapine. They were mercenaries, and with them all had been a mere question of money.

Gordon had not yet had time to show that he was utterly unlike his predecessors. Li, then, having only a limited knowledge of the new man's character, took no steps to discharge the debt that weighed upon the Anglo-Chinese army. What is worse, in less than three months he pledged his word to Gordon and broke it. The consequences of this were so serious that, but for certain pressing contingencies, Gordon would have left the Empire to its fate.

But Gordon had no sooner reached Shanghai, with the resolve to throw up his commission, than he found that Burgevine's treachery had been fully confirmed. That singular adventurer, through the instrumentality of a renegade named Jones, who had been master of the *Kiao-Chiao*, a small war-steamer belonging to the Chinese, had got together a band of foreign rowdies, and seized the vessel on his own account on August 1st. Having failed to recover command of the Ever-Victorious Army, he had avenged himself by entering into communication with the Tai-pings, and had succeeded, in the *Kiao-Chiao*, in reaching Soochow with a band of desperadoes of all nations, thoroughly armed. It was not for Gordon to desert his post in such a moment. He saw that the campaign had entered upon a new and desperate phase. He rode back to Quinsan, and at once resumed his command and the operations he had had in view.

The better to do his work, the more rigorously to grapple with the new peril, he had already written to Quinsan, which was now his head-quarters, for information as to the humour of his officers. No unsatisfactory signs appeared; but during the day there were reports of so serious a nature that he at once sent his siege-train to Taitsan for safety, and the principal part of his siege ammunition to Shanghai, while he despatched reinforcements to Kahpoo, his most advanced post. He had taken the decisive step of sending in his resignation to Li, and of enclosing a copy of it to General Brown, the instant the piratical capture of the *Kiachiao* and Burgevine's change of front came to his knowledge. In this letter he informed Li that he would remain in command of the force only until such time as he should receive replies from the British Minister and General. But now a crisis was imminent. To abandon the command would be to leave a suffering people not only at the mercy of the Tai-pings, but of the free-booter, whose treachery and love of violence might greatly strengthen the rebel cause. Moreover, Burgevine's popularity might draw men from the already disaffected force who had once served under the renegade commander. His former followers had not forgotten how on an occasion he had plundered the Treasury in order to obtain funds for their pay, despoiled temples and robbed the images of their jewels.

Gordon, therefore, with his own payments in arrear, was not a little anxious as to the influence of Burgevine's tactics on the rebel cause.

This situation of affairs excited general uneasiness, and the alarm was fully shared in by Colonel Hough, commanding at Shanghai, who wrote to General Brown that Burgevine's terms with the rebels whom he enlisted, some 300 in number, included, besides pay, an unrestrained license to sack every town they took, including Shanghai itself, which he thought no idle threat, owing to the present reduced state of Gordon's force, all reported to be treacherously inclined to join Burgevine. These and yet more serious anticipations were not, however, realized. Meantime Gordon was on the alert. He left Shanghai on the 1st of August for Quinsan, and sent for reinforcements to Kahpoo, for his station was seriously threatened by the rebels. The next day he proceeded in the *Cricket* to Kahpoo, where the rebels were in great force on all sides; not less than 40,000, led by Europeans, and coming up to close quarters. Having a howitzer and shell, they blew up one gunboat; and for the protection of the steamers it was necessary to reinforce the stockades by infantry and artillery. While all these attacks were repulsed, the rebels employed themselves in burning the villages around.

Gordon resolutely held on to Kahpoo and Quinsan,

feeling that if those strongholds were lost Shanghai would soon follow. To relieve his anxiety, he was obliged to move constantly between Quinsan and Kahpoo; for he had no officer fit to undertake the defence of the latter place, or to keep the rebels in check.

Some account of his movements, and his views on the situation of affairs at this time, may be gathered from the following letter, dated Quinsan, 12th August:

'Since my last Burgevine has joined the rebels, and they have tried hard to take Kahpoo, which is on the Grand Canal. We have, however, repulsed all their attacks, and they have now retired into Soochow. I think the rebels will soon get very tired of their auxiliaries and the latter of the rebels. Thirty of them deserted the other day, and came back to Shanghai. We had a field-fight with the rebels at Kahpoo, and drove them back two miles, burning their camp. They had become very audacious, and had come up close to the stockades, throwing fireballs into the same. The Mandarins are not a particularly nice set. There is nothing interesting about them; in fact, the Chinese are much more matter-of-fact people than Europe gives them credit for. I dare say you may have alarming news about the rebels this mail, but I can answer that this is exaggerated. There is no doubt but that the accession of Burgevine will give them some little spirit, but it cannot, in my opinion, last. The whole country around Wokong is flat, and intersected with large creeks. There are no roads, except the one leading to Hangchow from Soochow; and this one we now hold by the stockades at Kahpoo. . . . I am in a very isolated position, and have to do most of my work myself,

which accounts for my not writing at greater length to you. We took a large number of prisoners and let them go, having made soldiers of some of them. They are only too happy to get away from the rebels.'

A fortnight later there comes an allusion to the prospects of the Imperialists and of the fall of Soochow:

'Quinsan, 24th August, 1863.

'The fact that Burgevine has joined the rebels will no doubt very much prolong the rebellion, which, humanly speaking, would have almost been put down this year, and at the latest next spring; but the force at my command is too small in numbers to do everything, and one has to act with great caution with the changed aspect of affairs; added to which is the idea which the Imperialists have got into their heads that they can defeat the rebels in the field, which they cannot do. I did not give much credit to the rumours of Burgevine having joined the rebels till after the capture of Wokong, when the animated attack of the rebels suddenly awakened me. We repulsed their attack with success, and drove them back; but I saw enough to deter me from attacking Soochow for the present. We hold a good position, and as Sherard Osborne ought to be soon here, I do not wish to risk anything. Many people urge me to attack, but my opinion is so much against it that their persuasion will be in vain for the present. I feel I have so many lives entrusted to me that these are, as it were, at my disposal, and I will not risk them in an enterprise I consider rash. We have been very fortunate up to this, losing no more than 30 to 40 men in all our engagements, and not more than 60 to 80 wounded; and though it might be a fine

thing to take Soochow before Sherard Osborne arrived, I do not intend to run any risk. We have by the capture of Wokong very seriously affected the rebels; and if I can carry out my plan of taking Woosieh, and thus surrounding Soochow, I do not think it will be necessary to attack that place, but think they will leave. Burgevine is a very foolish man, and little thinks the immense misery he will cause this unhappy country, for of the ultimate suppression of the rebellion I have little doubt, as it is a Government receiving revenues contending with a faction almost blockaded, and drawing on exhaustible funds. The Imperialists are not likely to feel any great liking for foreigners after the way they have been treated by them. I am thinking of attacking a fortified post of the rebels at Pingwang, which threatens the city of Wokong, in a few days, and from which they have lately been making raids into the Imperialists' territory.'

General Brown, from his headquarters at Shanghai, lost no time in communicating with the Secretary of War on the perilous position of Gordon's force. In a despatch of September 14, he describes Gordon as entirely in the hands of men formerly in the pay of Ward and in communication with Burgevine, who had already tampered with some of the officers and lured over many to his side. The guns and munitions of war in Gordon's possession, furnished to him with the sanction of the British Government, were in peril, through treachery, of falling into the hands of the rebels. This would render General Brown's own

position most critical at Shanghai, he having no larger description of ordnance to contend against the rebels with than that which might be brought against him. These circumstances decided General Brown to visit Gordon's head-quarters in person, and to inspect his garrison. He found these in a very efficient state; nevertheless he considered it would be rash in the extreme for Gordon to hazard an attack.

Three days previous to the date of the despatch alluded to, Gordon was taking a more hopeful view of affairs, as may be seen from the following characteristic letter:

'Quinsan, 11th September, 1863.

'I have determined not to attack Soochow till Sherard Osborne arrives, for Burgevine's defection has very much increased the strength of the rebels, and it does not do to risk anything. I expect the rebels will very soon get sick of their men, and, in fact, cannot pay them what they promise. They are quiet, and our stockades are around two-thirds of the city, distant from here some twenty miles. Burgevine's boy, who acted as his interpreter, has run out, and says that Burgevine tells the Wangs all about the settlement and about the Force, etc., etc., which interests the Wangs very much. He is in good health, and very indolent; he has a nice lot with him, all the scum of Shanghai, which may be said to be celebrated for its produce in that way. He is not allowed to send money out of Soochow, so I expect the rebels intend eventually to take it all back again: this would not be the first time they had done a similar thing. An intercepted

letter from Burgevine says he has thirty to forty men who are with him, and who declare they will run away at the first opportunity, and he does not know where to send them.

'I was at first rather afraid of treachery among my officers, but now have no fear. One gentleman I turned away I found had been corresponding for some time with Burgevine, but he was such an owlet that it made no difference. Burgevine wrote to me two days before he joined the rebels, saying that he would come and see me, and that I was not to believe any of the reports about him, and that he would explain everything. I believe he now regrets his conduct.

'The presence of Europeans has not in any way changed the barbarities perpetrated by the rebels; they burn away as hard as ever round the city, and this place is full of poor destitute people, who are fed by subscriptions. They did not like the repulse at Kahpoo at all, and have not repeated it. The agents of Burgevine have been trying in vain to get the men over.'

In yet more hopeful terms Gordon continues his narrative as follows:

'Camp, Waiquaidong, two miles east of Soochow.
'25th September, 1863.

'I am now encamped in support of the Imperialists, who are stockaded some 1,800 yards from the walls. The Imperialists having moved up so close oblige me to have part of my force nearer them for support, and the weather being delightful, it is very agreeable. The rebels have made great efforts to drive the Imperialists away, but without success, and our present position

is extremely strong. Burgevine has been down at Shanghai, and escaped by a very little being captured. The United States Marshal, who has a nephew in this force, was seized in a lorcha with nine others; two other boats with arms were captured, and Burgevine jumped into the river. This shows what men these Americans are. This United States Marshal pretended that no one was on board the boat; but the men were found below. I do not think I told you that Kongzu was taken by the Imperialists; this is very important, as they have no place but Hangchow by which they (the rebels) can now get arms, and I expect Burgevine will lose caste by his mishap; the rebels do not generally make much allowance. . . A great many Europeans have left him, and I think there are not more than thirty or forty there now. The Imperialists here are very good, and we get on very well with them; they make first-rate stockades, and work willingly. We have now some native troops at Quinsan, and at Taitsan; also some of H. M.'s 67th at the latter place. The rebel shells are very poor things, not one in twenty bursts; they have some of brass, but they are not much better. The rebels are not in very good spirits, and are moving their things southward towards Wuchu, through the Taho Lake.'

Events were now progressing more favourably for the Ever Victorious Army, and the spirits of the Commander rose as he more clearly discerned the final success of his cause. His next letter is written at Patachow, on the day following the capture of that place.

'Stockades, Patachow, 30th September, 1863.

'Finding that the Imperialists were incommoded by the presence of some stockades at Patachow, I determined to attack these. The stockades were very feebly held, and the loss in capturing them nil. In repulsing an attack made to recapture them, we had five men wounded. The rebels are now threatened on the south as well as the east, and I heard to-day that the rebels had approached close to Woosieh. The Patachow Bridge is a fifty-three arched bridge, 300 yards long. I am very sorry to say that twenty-six of the arches fell in yesterday like a pack of cards, killing two men; ten others escaped by running as the arches fell one after another as fast as a man could run. It made a tremendous noise, and my boat was nearly smashed by the ruins. I regret it immensely, as it was unique and very old; in fact a thing to come some distance to see. I am afraid it was my fault, as I had commenced removing an archway to let a steamer through into the Taho Lake, and this caused the fall, as each arch rested on the other. Two men were saved, though they fell in the water. Matters go very badly for the rebels, and I expect in two or three mails to be able to announce the fall of Soochow. We are now two miles from it on the Grand Canal. The steamers do great execution. We attacked Patachow at 11 a.m., and took it by outflanking and threatening the use of the stockades; it was a very simple affair.'

One evening Gordon was seated alone on the parapet of the bridge—referred to in the preceding letter—smoking a cigar, when two shots in succession struck the stone on which he sat. These shots, which were purely accidental, had come from his own camp, it not

being known that he was there. On the second striking the seat, he thought it time to descend, and rowed across the creek to make inquiries as to what was going on. He had not been long on the river when that part of the bridge on which he had been seated gave way, and fell into the water, nearly smashing his boat. This narrow escape from falling through with the ruins, to which he does not himself allude, is one of those incidents which added not a little to the reputation he had acquired of having a charmed life.

At Patachow negotiations were opened with him by the Europeans in the Tai-ping service; many of these had formerly been his comrades, though now serving on the other side. The communication these men had to make was that they were by no means satisfied with their position at Soochow, and that they desired him to meet and talk on the subject with Burgevine, who was of the same mind. These conferences were to take place on a bridge between the opposing lines.

Dangerous as the business was, Gordon at once agreed to it. Burgevine stated that he and his men had resolved to quit the rebel service; but that they would not do so unless they could obtain some guarantee of their not being held responsible to the Imperial Government. On this Gordon undertook that the authorities at Shanghai should let the matter drop, and even offered to take as many of the men as he could, and assist the rest to leave the country.

The repulse of his first attempt upon Gordon in the field had dispirited Burgevine, who was slow in his movements, and could not contend against the brilliant and rapid manœuvres of his opponent. The negotiations led to nothing at the moment, except that in a measure they rallied Burgevine's spirits. In his next interview with Gordon he betrayed an ambition he had long indulged in. His dream had been to found an empire for himself, and he had fixed on China as a fit country in which to fulfil it. He even proposed that Gordon should join him. They would seize on Soochow, expel both rebels and Imperialists, lay hands on the treasure contained therein, raise an army of 20,000 men, and march on Pekin. Gordon indignantly dispelled these hallucinations, and curtly informed him he would entertain no such idea.

Meantime much fighting was going on, and a desperate and futile attempt was made by the rebels to re-take Wokong. Though the recent negotiations had seemed to end in nothing, they were soon to bear fruit. Burgevine and his gang had convinced themselves of one thing, that they could rely on Gordon's word; and they sent him secret information to the effect that they purposed to make a sally, with a view to deserting and throwing themselves on his protection. The manner of doing this was agreed on: seeing a signal-rocket from Gordon's lines, they were to board the *Hyson* as

if intent on her capture. This they did with such a show of purpose that thousands of the Tai-ping troops rushed to their assistance, but these were repulsed with shot and shell, while the *Hyson* steamed back and safely landed the deserters in the besieging camp. Burgevine and several other of the Europeans were, however, not among them. Morton, their leader, said that the Moh-Wang, the commander, seemed to suspect them, so they thought it wise to leave at once without waiting for the rest.

The majority of these deserters were seamen who had been lured into Soochow with little idea as to their destination. Their condition was pitiable in the extreme, and their gratitude on finding themselves within Gordon's lines was hardly less touching. Nearly all of them volunteered to stay and fight for him to whom they owed their release from starvation and death. Gordon, immediately he heard of Burgevine's detention, wrote and despatched the following letter* to two of the principal Wangs of Soochow:

'Stockades, Patachow, 16th October, 1863.

'To their Excellencies, Chung Wang, Moh Wang.

'YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

'You must be already aware that I have on all occasions, when it lay in my power, been merciful to

* Some of the words in this letter were obliterated by blood-spots, under circumstances to be shown later.

your soldiers when taken prisoners, and not only been so myself, but have used every endeavour to prevent the Imperial authorities from practising any inhumanity. Ask for the truth of this statement any of the men who were taken at Wokong, and who, some of them, must have returned to Soochow, as I placed no restriction on them whatever.

'Having stated the above, I now ask your Excellencies to consider the case of the Europeans in your service. In every army each soldier must be actuated with faithful feelings to fight well. A man made to fight against his will is not only a bad soldier, but he is a positive danger, causing anxiety to his leaders, and absorbing a large force to prevent his defection. If there are many Europeans left in Soochow, I would ask your Excellencies if it does not seem to you much better to let these men quietly leave your service if they wish it; you would thereby get rid of a continual source of suspicion, gain the sympathy of the whole of the foreign nations, and feel that your difficulties are all from without. Your Excellencies may think that decapitation would soon settle the matter, but you would then be guilty of a crime which will bear its fruits sooner or later. In this force officers and men come and go at pleasure, and although it is inconvenient at times, I am never apprehensive of treason from within. Your Excellencies may rely on what I say, that should you behead the Europeans who are with you, or retain them against their free will, you will eventually regret it. The men have committed no crime, and they have done you good service, and what they have tried to do, viz., escape, is nothing more than any man, or even animal, will do when placed in a situation he does not like.

'The men could have done you great harm, as you will no doubt allow; they have not done so, and I con-

sider that your Excellencies have reaped great benefit from their assistance. As far as I am personally concerned, it is a matter of indifference whether the men stay or leave; but as a man who wishes to save these unfortunate men, I intercede.

'Your Excellencies may depend you will not suffer by letting these men go; you need not fear their communicating information. I knew your force, men and guns, long ago, and therefore care not to get that information from them. If my entreaties are unavailing for these men in . . . . yourself by sending down the wounded, and perform an action never to be regretted.

'I write the above with my own hand, as I do not wish to entrust the matter to a linguist; and trusting you will accede to my request, I conclude,

'Your Excellencies' obedient servant,

'C. G. GORDON,

'Major Commanding.'

In a letter written from the Patachow Stockades, dated 19th October, 1863, Gordon gives some account of these events:

'The day after the fall of the Patachow Bridge we saw the smoke-stack of the *Kiachiao* steamer under the bridge near Soochow, and this being suspicious, I moved up a boat to reconnoitre with a 24-pounder howitzer. The rebels remained quiet till we came up to 1,000 yards of their position, when they opened fire from a 32-pounder, which they had on a boat, and from the *Kiachiao*, and made us fall back to the stockades. Their infantry tried at the same time to turn our flanks, but we made sorties and soon drove them back. The fight

began about 1 p.m., and lasted till 6 p.m.; the loss on our side was trifling, the rebels lost 200 killed and wounded. The next day overtures were made to me by Burgevine and others to come over. These meetings went on from day to day owing to the difficulties that intervened as to coming over; and although they did come over to the number of thirty-six, Burgevine and others were suspected and retained. The *dénoûment* of the affair took place on the 16th October. On the 14th October, Wokong, a town on the Grand Canal below this, was threatened by the head rebel chief of Taitsan Tsah and three Wangs with 2,000 men. The Imperials had tried to drive them away, but had been repulsed, and as the city had only three days' provisions I had to go down with 600 men from this. The rebels were very strongly posted, and we had a very heavy fight for three hours, dislodging them with difficulty, but eventually capturing six stockades and pursuing them for ten miles. The rebels fought very well, and our loss was heavy, being thirty killed and wounded.

'After Burgevine had been arrested, and the thirty-six Europeans had come over, I wrote to the rebel chiefs to tell them that the men who had left him had done what might be expected from the way they were treated, and told them that the foreign nations looked with disfavour at the forcible retention of Europeans. Moh Wang answered me in very polite style, and said that Europeans had no reason to run away, as they were free to come and to go. He said he would wish much to see me, and would guarantee my safety, etc.; also that the Europeans who had run away had taken away gunboats, arms, horses, etc. I answered that I sent back the boat and arms the men had taken, and assured him they had taken no horses. He said in his letter that Burgevine had promised him great things, and had

done nothing. He asked the messenger a great deal about me, and if it were possible to buy me over, and was told it was not. He asked why the Europeans wanted to run away, and was told that it was because they saw there was no chance of success. He said, "Do you think that Gordon will take the city?" and was told, "Yes." This seemed to make him reflect. The messenger told me the city is and was in great confusion, as it is not only the departure of the Europeans that affects them, but the fact of these Europeans being of opinion that the cause is lost. Burgevine is safe, and not badly treated. I am trying my utmost to get him out; and then, if I can see a man to take my place, I shall leave this service, my object being gained—namely, to show the public what they doubted, that there were English officers who could conduct operations as well as mates of ships, and also to rid the neighbourhood of Shanghai of these free-booters. I care nothing for a high name. If I had, I should have written far more about the various fights. My hope is that the Chinese Government may feel that they have been fairly treated by me, and learn that we are not all actuated by greed. That they do so now I believe, as they have every confidence in me.

'This defection of the Europeans is an almost extinguishing blow to the rebels; and from the tone of Moh-Wang's letter, so different from the one he wrote to General Staveley a little time ago, I feel convinced that the rebel chiefs would come to terms if they had fair ones offered them. I mean to do my best to bring these about; and I am sure that if I do so, I shall gain a greater victory than any captures of cities would be. Sherard Osborne has made what to others would be very tempting offers; but he does not know my character or feelings. I am determined to leave the command, even

if on the eve of certain victory, as soon as I can get a man to take my place. . . . I am very hard-worked now, and, as you may imagine, have to write a great deal officially. The whole of the late defection has been a nasty business (*vide* the newspapers), and so distasteful that I will not inflict it on you. Now to leave a very distasteful subject.'

Gordon feared that Burgevine would be decapitated in consequence of what had happened; and for this reason he had at once sent the letter and presents to Moh-Wang, together with all the Enfields brought into camp, and entreated him to spare Burgevine's life. It is recorded that after these events the Tai-ping chief sent Burgevine away in safety, and delivered him up to the American Consul. At Gordon's request, all proceedings against him were waived on condition that he left the country. When these affairs were investigated by Mr. Mayers, the acting British Consul at Shanghai, who was sent to inquire into them, the desperate character of Burgevine was fully brought to light. That gentleman stated in an official letter that at the very moment when the interviews were proceeding, in which Burgevine offered to surrender, he was planning with Jones, his lieutenant, to entrap the man on whose mercy he had cast himself and his followers. His companion, desperate as he was, had some honesty left, and revolted against such treachery. This, among other things, gave rise to much ill-feeling against him

in his Captain's mind. But for the fact that Gordon's frankness had no untoward result, the confidence with which, at the risk of his life, he negotiated with others, one would say displayed a want of that common prudence which others find so necessary.

As has been said, the foreigners were most grateful to Gordon for the skill with which he had planned and carried out their escape on the *Hyson*. Their gratitude was warmly expressed in a deposition afterwards made before the United States Consul, by Jones, Morton, Porter, Barclay, and Whiting. This document gives a very full account of the plot and counter-plot between Burgevine and those of his friends who had not lost all confidence in him, but who had resolved on deserting him after a drunken outrage of which he was guilty in firing on his lieutenant, Jones. It is thus described by Jones himself:

'At noon I went to Burgevine, who was lying asleep on board a 32-pounder gunboat, and asked him whether I should assist him to get ashore, as many of our officers and men were making remarks on the condition he was in. On his demanding the names of those who had made remarks, I declined giving them, and shortly afterwards again attempted to remonstrate with him, in company with another officer. On my again declining to give up names, Burgevine drew out his four-barrelled pistol, which he cocked and discharged at my head from a distance of about nine inches. The bullet entered my left cheek and passed upwards. It

has not yet been extracted. I exclaimed, "You have shot your best friend!". His answer was, "I know I have, and I wish to God I had killed you!"'

Burgevine fully confirmed the truth of the above statement in a letter which he sent to a local paper, in which he said:

'Captain Jones's account of the affair is substantially correct; and I feel great pleasure in bearing testimony to his veracity and candour whenever any affair with which he is personally acquainted is concerned.

Owing to the heat of the weather there had been great inactivity in the garrison, and the men were falling sick. This determined Gordon to remove from Quinsan and encamp at Wai-Quaidong, six miles from the East Gate of Soochow, the doomed city. Meantime McCartney had been doing good service in various ways; but the Imperialists, though in certain cases they fought to some purpose, were guilty of more than one mistake. This was owing to the blundering arrogance of Ching, who before attacking, steadily refused to consult with Gordon as to his intentions. The consequence was that while Gordon was making the greatest efforts to effect the escape of Burgevine and his party from Soochow, Ching, on his own account, was marching a force on the East Gate of that city. Thus the foreigners, whose release was imminent, were

ordered by the rebel Wang within the walls to the point of attack, and the scheme for their escape was thwarted. It was brought about later on, but only because the feint planned by Gordon was complete. When they got away, it was at the risk of their lives and of those who were forced to remain behind. It is not necessary to give in detail the difficulties which Gordon encountered through the clumsy manœuvres of his Chinese colleague. It will be enough to say that they were great indeed, inasmuch as it was the opinion of on-lookers at Shanghai that, with Ching on his hands, it would be impossible for him, even after the successes he had achieved, ever to take Soochow. With the overwhelming numbers in his front, the vast extent of territory he had to protect, the rough and disorderly condition of his men, and the little support afforded by the Imperial Government, it seemed beyond hope that even he could succeed; and many were the cries from all quarters that, unless Gordon were given the entire command of the allied troops, defeat was inevitable, and his death a not unlikely result of the campaign. With this command he was never entrusted; and we shall presently see what were the fortunes of war in his hands, as the Captain of his mutinous and now sickly force.

His advance had been checked by various attacks of the rebels, now at Wokong, now at Wulungchiao, a

village about two miles to the west of Patachow, and a mile and three quarters only from the South Gate of Soochow. But all these had been repulsed, as well as an assault on Chanzu.

A letter written by him from Wulungchiao, in the intervals of engagements with the enemy, gives a vivid idea of what went on.

'You will remember my having mentioned the fact of the Europeans and Burgevine having come over from the rebels. Since then the following have been our movements: We started for the Fifty-three Arch Bridge (alas! now only twenty-seven arched), Patachow, and made a great detour by the lakes to Kahpoo to throw the rebels off the scent. We left at 2 p.m., and although the place, Wulungchiao, which I wanted to attack was only 1½ miles to the west of Patachow, I made a detour of 30 miles to confuse them, on a side they were not prepared for. It turned out wet, and the night of the 23rd October was miserable enough, cooped up in boats as we were. However, it cleared a little before dawn, and about 7 a.m. we came on the stockades. I had asked the Imperialists, under General Ching, to delay their attack from Patachow till I had become well engaged; but as usual General Ching must needs begin at 5.30 a.m., and he got a good dressing from the rebels and was forced to retire. His loss was 19 killed and 67 wounded, while the Taho gunboat admiral, who had abetted him in his tom-fooling, lost 30 killed and wounded. We lost none; three were slightly bruised. The head chief of Soochow, Moh-Wang, knew we were out, but had no idea of our going to Wulungchiao. He is greatly

angered, and in addition to this has had trouble with his brother Wangs, who reproach him for having trusted the Europeans and for neglecting them. Eleven out of twenty-seven Wangs refused to go out and fight. Yesterday afternoon a European left Soochow and came over. I had met him before, and consider that he had acted in a very brave manner in remaining in Soochow. He says Moh-Wang does not understand our movements, and is very much put out at the loss of this place. They tried to take it back again on the 25th at dusk, but got defeated.'

'29th October, 1863.

'Since my last letter an expedition went out to drive the rebels away from Wokong; they had had the temerity to return there, after their defeat on the 13th, and occupied nearly the same position. I sent a steamer this time, and the result was a most tremendous victory; almost equal to the Quinsan affair, and resulting from the same cause, namely, the rebels being driven out of their position, had to retreat along a narrow road running along the bank of the Grand Canal and close to it. They could not leave the road, and there are innumerable large creeks passing from it at right angles into the Taho Lake, and only spanned by bridges on this road. These bridges are narrow and high, and one person or two can only pass over at one time. Thus you may imagine the delay which occurs at each bridge; frequently the road was about 3 or 4 feet wide for 200 or 300 yards, having a lake or ditch on one side and the Grand Canal on the other. I will not give details, as I have no time; suffice it to say that after the flanks of their position were turned, the rebels began their retreat on Pingwang, and had 12 miles of the above road to traverse under fire of the steamer,

and pursued by the troops. About 3,000 to 4,000 got away, one Wang and 1,300 prisoners were taken, and one Wang and some men were drowned. The rush of the fugitives was met by a reinforcement from Pingwang on a high bridge, and the former swept the latter in one mass into the lake. The value of the victory is that we now have no fear for our rear, and I believe that the rebels in the silk districts seriously think of giving in. In the meantime I am preparing an attack on the north of the city, which will take place about the 1st November. You will see all the Burgevine affair in the papers. I am afraid he is a rascal, but I acted to the best of my judgment. I told you I had been attacked here. It was Chung Wang and his son who attacked, and had to swim the creek in consequence of our having cut off their retreat.'

The crowning mercy of the campaign was soon to come. After making a strong disposition of the Imperial forces both at the outposts and on the Great Lake, Gordon swept round by the eastward of Soochow to the north with his siege-train and the *Hyson*, to reduce the remaining outposts held by the Tai-pings around the city. He carried Leeku by assault, and in the course of the next few days captured and occupied points which completed the investment of the city. Within it were 30,000 Tai-pings.

In almost all these engagements, Gordon found it necessary to be constantly in the front, and often to lead in person. The officers of his force were brave men enough, but were not always ready to face their

desperate antagonists. Gordon, in his mild way, would take one or other of these by the arm, and lead him into the thick of the fire. He always went unarmed himself, even when foremost in the breach. He never recognised danger; to him a shower of bullets was no more than a hail-storm. He carried one weapon to direct his troops—he had but a little cane, and this soon won for itself the name of 'Gordon's magic wand of victory.' His Chinese followers, seeing him always victorious, always foremost in the fight, concluded it was his wand that ensured him protection. The idea encouraged the Ever Victorious Army greatly, and was of more service to the young Commander than all the arms he could have borne.

Some days previously to the assault on Leeku, Gordon found a letter in the handwriting of one of his officers, Captain Perry. It informed a Tai-ping sympathizer of the intended movements of the force. Captain Perry confessed he had written the letter, but declared he thought the facts were of no importance; it was only meant as a piece of gossip. To this statement Gordon replied: 'I shall pass your fault over this time, on condition that, in order to show your loyalty, you undertake to lead the next forlorn hope.' But Gordon had forgotten the severe test to which he had pledged his comrade, when a few days later they stood together by the ditch in front of the stockade. Both

were leading a forlorn hope, when a ball struck Perry in the mouth. He fell screaming into his Captain's arms, and almost immediately expired.

'I have another report to make to you of our operations,' says Gordon in allusion to the late engagement: 'We started from Wai-Quaidong on the 31st October, and slept the night at Ding-King. At 4 a.m. we left for Leeku, and having met the Imperial forces some 15,000 strong at Chowdong, we advanced at 11 a.m. to attack. We began the action at 12.30 p.m., and got round their right flank, but as they had another road they did not move. We, therefore, carried it with a rush. I am sorry to say an officer, a very good one, Lieutenant Perry, was killed. Only 3 men were slightly wounded. The rebels fought well, and held on to the last; they lost some 40 to 60 killed, and we took 3 gunboats, about 40 other boats, and some 60 prisoners; I have no time to give details.'

He further writes on the 3rd of November:

'We yesterday, after a hard fight, took all the stockades up to the walls along the east face of the city, and last night four Wangs came in to negociate a surrender. I think that this is likely, and the heaviest part of our fighting is over. The rebels are having great troubles among themselves, and have to pay largely for their food.'

The next point of attack was Wanti, where, as well as at Leeku, it was Gordon's aim to station a part of the force. The surrender of Wanti meant the almost

complete investment of Soochow; for so soon as stockades and forts were captured by the Ever-Victorious Army, they had been garrisoned by Imperialist troops. With this exception, then, all the waterways and roads leading from the devoted city were now closed.

Eleven days after his arrival at and capture of Leeku, Gordon went to the attack of Wanti. The place was so strongly fortified that the heaviest shelling was of no avail. He, however, lost no time in surrounding it, and took it by assault in less than an hour. The rebels, terror-stricken at his approach, began to make their escape in large numbers, and a series of fierce hand-to-hand fights followed outside the walls.

Gordon thus gives his own account of the affair:

'Since I last wrote we have had another fight, and have happily driven the rebels out of this stockade. We left Leeku on the 11th November, and had two miles to go before we came here. We managed to completely surround the place, and took it by assault in three quarters of an hour. I am sorry we had one officer killed and twenty men wounded. The casualties were more numerous from our men having had a cross fire from our own artillery. The rebels fought very bravely, and we took 600 prisoners, and I do not think more than 10 got away. Their loss was heavy, some 350; this was owing in a great measure to the fire of the artillery.

I had men fighting here who had fought against us a week ago at Leeku. They behaved very well. From what the prisoners say, the rebels are much disheartened. We took all their head men prisoners. You will see a place called Tajowka on the map; this stockade was the one attacked by Burgevine and Chung-Wang, and where the *Kajow* steamer was blown up. I do not know if I mentioned that Lai-Wang, who was in charge of the northern stockades, had offered to come over with his force, some 20,000 men. Unfortunately he was killed in one of the skirmishes which took place after the capture of Leeku, and thus his defection did not take place. The head men here say the rebels almost despair of holding the city. I hope sincerely they will leave it, as it ruins the soldiers to plunder after the capture. The Burgevine party are a nice lot, but their defection has been a great thing for the Imperials, and has caused a corresponding depression on the side of the rebels. I think a map explains the advantages of a position far better than any description; it will suffice to say that there is only one stockade to take to cut off the rebel retreat, which we hope to have in a few days. The investment of the city will be then complete, and dissension may work the fall of the place when they have only two months' rice. I sent an expedition into the Taho Lake about the time I started for the attack on Leeku, and the steamer has just returned, having captured six gunboats, four high chiefs and some hundred prisoners, and two stockades; another expedition will start in a day or two of two steamers and infantry. The place I propose to attack is Mouding, on the Grand Canal; it is only four miles from there to the lake, and the rebels there have no option but to surrender. The Imperialists will

guarantee their safety, and more than three-fourths of them would jump at the chance.'

We shall presently see how guarantees, when assured by the Imperialists, were disregarded, and what fatal consequences ensued from their violation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MURDER OF THE KINGS.

In the investment of Soochow there were employed some 13,000 to 14,000 men, of which between 3,000 and 4,000 were under Gordon's orders. But in the neighbourhood there were 25,000 Imperialists besides, whose centre was at Fushan, and who were under General Ching. The Tai-pings had 40,000 men at Soochow and the suburbs alone, with 20,000 more in the city of Wusieh, and 18,000 in Mahtanchiao, a place between Wusieh and Soochow, whence Chung Wang, the Faithful King, could attack on the flank any advance on the Grand Canal.

Gordon knew all this, and was alive to the danger of such overwhelming forces. But he had made his calculations. He knew the Faithful King could only approach Soochow on the east of his outlying armies, at the imminent risk of exposing Nanking, and of losing Hangchow, as well as the city actually under siege. On his part, the Tai-ping leader knew that

Nanking was hard pressed, and that should that capital be wrested from him, the rebellion could no longer be sustained. The works around the Kaiachiao Gate of Nanking had been already evacuated, and the city was beleaguered. This intelligence was in Gordon's possession; it had been intercepted by the Imperialists at the very moment when the action of the Faithful King was paralyzed, and his forces could move neither one way nor the other without danger of rout and destruction. Gordon determined on a vigorous assault upon the north-east angle of the Soochow wall. First of all, however, he tried to capture a formidable inner line of the outer defences, and he accordingly made a night attack. This resulted in defeat, for the place was extraordinarily strong and well guarded. About one o'clock in the morning the young Commander himself, with Majors Howard and Williams, advanced to the outer stockade, leaving the remainder of his force under orders to come on at a given signal. All were dressed in white turbans, in order that they might not mistake each other for the enemy in the dark. Everything seemed quiet, and an advance-guard succeeded in climbing the breastwork. Scarcely were the troops at the front engaged on the stockade to support their commander, when the Tai-pings opened a tremendous fire of grape and musketry. The rebel line seemed one line of fire, while the attacking party

were throwing rockets and shell. The leading files, with Gordon at their head, held gallantly on at the breastwork, but those detailed to support them failed to move up, and Gordon was compelled to retire. The rebels, though they had the best of it, did not seem to like fighting in the dark. The exception was Moh-Wang, who was in the front stockade, without shoes or stockings, and who fought like a private soldier, with twenty Europeans at his side. The attack, though unsuccessful, made a strong impression. The rebel loss, the work of twenty guns which during three hours poured out shot and shell, was enormous. Of the Ever Victorious Army, 50 rank and file were killed, and 130 wounded, besides a large number of officers.

Next morning General Ching had an interview with the Faithful King, and learned that there was great dissension among the Wangs in Soochow. It appeared that, with the exception of Moh-Wang and 35 other chiefs, these were anxious to come over to the Imperialists with 30,000 men. It had become evident to the leaders that, in spite of their success of the night before, the fall of their city was only a work of time, and they therefore proposed that Gordon should make another attack on the East Gate, when they would shut Moh-Wang out of the city, and so get liberty to make terms for themselves.

Accordingly Gordon brought siege guns and all his

force into action, opened a tremendous fire on the stockades, and quickly reduced them to ruins. The advance was sounded, and the stockades were taken by assault. Gordon, accompanied only by a few men, was cut off from his main body by a large party of the enemy, and, being unable to fall back, deemed it the safer course to press forward. He found the stockades on his right almost empty. He pushed through them, and seized the nearest stone fort. The stockades he had passed happened to be occupied by some of his own men, who followed up his advance and completed the victory. It cost the young Captain fifty privates, and many of the officers of his body-guard, chiefly his own countrymen. Many others were wounded, among them Major Kirkham, the Adjutant General, whose energetic services could ill be spared.

The following general order, dated Low Mun, Soochow, November 30, 1863, was issued at this time by Gordon:

'The commanding officer congratulates the officers and men of the force on their gallant conduct of yesterday. The tenacity of the enemy, and the great strength of their position, have unfortunately caused many casualties, and the loss of many valuable officers and men. The enemy, however, has now felt our strength, and, although fully prepared and animated by the presence of their most popular chiefs, have been driven out of a position which surpasses in

strength any yet taken from them. The loss of the whole of the stockades on the east side of the city, up to the walls, has already had its effect, and dissension is now rife in the garrison, who, hemmed in on all sides, are already, in fact, negotiating defection. The commanding officer feels most deeply for the heavy loss, but is convinced that the same will not be experienced again. The possession of the position of yesterday renders the occupation of the city by the rebels untenable, and thus victualling the city is lost to them.'

Gordon, accompanied by Ching, now had an interview with the Wangs. They wished him to assault the city itself, promising not to assist in its defence, provided they were protected on the entry of the Imperialists. The arrangement presented many and great difficulties. Little more than 5,500 men were available for the attack. The walls were circumvallated by a ditch of an appalling width; while north of the East Gate there were lines of stockades as far as the eye could reach. But the city was completely commanded from without, and was so cut off from all communication that it could have held out but little longer. When the Nar-Wang appealed to Gordon to carry it by assault, Gordon told him that if Soochow was thus taken, it would be impossible to prevent his force from sacking and burning it. He added that if the Wangs were sincere in their wish to surrender, their course should be to give over a gate as a warranty of their good faith; that if they could

not do this, they might either vacate the place, or fight it out. They agreed to hand over a gate, and the arrangement of the terms of capitulation were left to General Ching, Gordon himself starting off to see Li, to negotiate for the safety of any prisoners.

Meantime Moh-Wang, who was obstinate, and resolved to hold out to the very last, had learned something of these parleys, and had his suspicions thoroughly aroused. He sent for his six brother kings that he might speak with them on the subject. After certain ceremonies, they adjourned to the reception-hall, where Moh-Wang seated himself at the head of a table, which was on a daïs. Unfortunately for the rebel cause, the chiefs thus collected together in council had each a separate command, and were therefore able to enforce their differences of opinion. Moh-Wang was captain of the city. He was not wise, but he was brave as a lion, and would have shed the last drop of his blood rather than surrender. Gordon knew this, and had a great respect for his character. He had in person extorted a pledge from Governor Li that Moh-Wang's life should be spared, but this pledge he was never to call upon Li to keep. The council was the last at which Moh-Wang was ever to preside. The question of capitulation was raised and discussed: Moh-Wang and another voted against surrender; all the rest were loud in its favour. Hot words ensued, when Kong

Wang jumped up, threw aside his robes, drew out a dagger, and stabbed Moh-Wang nine times in the back. Assisted by the others, he then bore his victim into the outer court, and severed his head from his body. This was the story told to Gordon on his return to the lines before Soochow, after pleading the cause of Moh-Wang and his followers with Li.

Soochow surrendered that very night. Gordon, to prevent looting, withdrew his troops to some distance, and went a second time to confer with Li. To him he applied for two months' extra pay for officers and men, as a reward for what they had gone through, as compensation for their abstaining from plunder, and as an inducement for them to push on with him for the attack of Wusieh. This boon, small as it was, was denied him. Later on General Ching came to him with an offer from Li of one month's extra pay. This meanness disgusted the men, who were by this time almost mutinous, and would rather have had a day's loot than four months' pay. Gordon, unable to trust them in the neighbourhood of a fallen city, marched them at once to Quinsan.

Nearly all the fighting which led to the capitulation had been done, as all knew, by Gordon and Gordon's men. He little thought that the influence he had so brilliantly acquired would be set aside so soon in favour of Chinese principles. It was fully understood by Li

and by Ching that humanity, as practised by the nations of the West, must be observed so long as Gordon was in command. The English leader had been promised as much, and looked to his Chinese comrades that the promise should be kept. But no sooner had Soochow surrendered, than he found himself completely betrayed. He had exposed himself to danger with the coolness and daring of one who believed himself invulnerable, and he might well think that in thus perilling his life, he had earned a right to plead for the lives of others. Though he does not appear to have had any emphatic and express promise from Li that the rebel Wangs should be spared, it is quite certain, as will be seen, that Li so far acquiesced in his views and wishes as to leave him in the belief that the Wangs would be humanely treated. This may be said to have amounted to a complete understanding, which was unhesitatingly confirmed on every occasion by General Ching, who, as far as can be gathered from the various accounts, was conscious of Gordon's just expectations in regard to what should happen when Soochow was given up to the Imperialists. What actually happened was this. Returning from Quinsan, Gordon entered the city for the first time and alone. He was met by Ching, who informed him that Li had extended mercy to all. This pleased and satisfied Gordon, for in his negotiations with the Wangs he

had made them the promise, endorsed by Li, that they should receive honourable treatment. The next day, December 6, Gordon again went into Soochow, to the house of Nar-Wang, which he reached before noon. He then found that the Wangs were to go out to Li, and formally give over the keys of the city. Gordon, proceeding alone towards the East Gate, met a large party of Imperialists who were yelling and firing their muskets into the air. He remonstrated with them, saying that their conduct would frighten the rebels, and lead to misunderstandings. Immediately after this, Ching came in at the gate, and on seeing Gordon became much agitated, and turned pale. The time of the interview between Li and the chiefs had passed. Gordon anxiously inquired what had been the result; but Ching only equivocated, and would give him no definite information. Gordon, who was on horseback, unaccompanied by anyone but his interpreter, at once suspected that something had gone wrong, and rode towards Nar-Wang's palace to see what he could learn there. On his arrival he found the place gutted; the Imperialists had already begun their plunder. An uncle of Nar-Wang entreated him to go along with him to his house, and to help him in escorting thither the ladies of Nar-Wang's family. Matters already looked so threatening that Gordon hesitated, as he was unarmed. At length he yielded,

purposing first to see the women safe, and then to go out for some of his own troops, and put a stop to the looting of his allies.

So ill-organized was the local Chinese Government, and so independent was Li of the military commanders, to whom he owed the supremacy he enjoyed, that he not only executed his own plans without reference to others, but did not even intimate to Gordon—who was, he may possibly have believed, in quarters at Quisan—the danger of entering the city. By this time he had beheaded the principal Wangs, and given up Soochow to plunder. Gordon's situation was most perilous; what made it worse was that he was wholly ignorant of the massacre which had been secretly effected outside the town, and of which Ching had not had the courage to inform him. It is not surprising, therefore, that when he entered the courtyard of the house with Nar-Wang's uncle and his family, he at once was surrounded by some thousands of armed Tai-pings, who shut the gates on him as he went in, and declined to allow him to send out his interpreter with a message to his troops. Fortunately it happened that the Tai-pings no more knew than Gordon himself that their chiefs had been put to death. Had they done so, they would have held Gordon responsible, and might have put him to torture. As it was, they held him as a hostage for the good

treatment of their leaders. He was kept powerless in the palace from the afternoon of the 6th till the morning of the next day, surrounded by Tai-pings, who knew that the city was being plundered contrary to treaty, and who must have surmised that bloodshed was going on, and that some untoward fate had overtaken the Wangs who had gone out to Governor Li. Such a suspicion might have made Gordon their victim; but he was left unharmed, probably from the forlorn hope that his presence might yet be a protection to themselves. Few men have looked upon death under circumstances so intricate and so threatening. But Gordon's life was to be preserved for other times and other events.

By two in the morning he had prevailed on his captors to let his interpreter take out a letter to his boat, which lay at anchor under the South Gate. It is characteristic of him that his message contained no reference to himself, but consisted of an order to the captain of his flotilla to seize on the Governor's person and lay him by the heels until the Wangs were given up. This was a fine stroke of policy and perfectly sincere; but it failed. The guide in charge returned alone, stating that the interpreter had been seized by the Imperialists, and the letter taken and torn up. At three o'clock the Tai-pings were so far persuaded as to allow Gordon himself to go out

in search of the missing interpreter. He reached the South Gate, where some Imperialist soldiers, not knowing probably who he was, took him prisoner for being in the company of rebels. From them he made his escape, and found his way round to the East Gate where his body-guard was camped under Major Brookes. True to his purpose and to his word, he sent the guard at once to the protection of the Tai-pings he had quitted an hour before. Soon after General Ching made his appearance; but Gordon, after all that had happened to himself, and all that he had witnessed in the city, refused to hold communication with him. Ching then sent an artillery officer named Bailey to explain matters. But this gentleman had not courage to tell the truth; and when Gordon asked him what had become of the Wangs, and if they were still prisoners, he replied that he did not know, but that he would bring in Nar-Wang's son, who was in his tent.

The interview which followed opened Gordon's eyes. He learned that the Wangs had been executed on the previous day, and was so deeply moved at the intelligence that he burst into tears. He at once crossed the creek, on the other banks of which the Wangs had been murdered, and there he was not long in discovering their bodies, headless and frightfully gashed.

It was probably the most trying moment of his life,

and never perhaps had he before given way to so angry an outburst of sorrow. Not only was this butchery needless and brutal, but the feeling came bitterly home to him that his own honour was at stake. He had not pledged himself for their safety, but he had negotiated with them on the understanding, as a primary condition, that their lives would be spared. As we have seen, he had refused to hold any parley with Ching. That General, however, had seen enough of his state of mind to greatly fear the consequences, and to feel that the Governor's life was in danger should Gordon come in contact with him. Not the least offence to Gordon, a very flagrant one in itself—and this had not even been notified to him—was that the Imperialists had sacked the city. Owing to this discourtesy the man through whose daring and skill Soochow had fallen, saw himself made a prisoner and in peril of his life. It is not to be wondered at if Gordon was enraged beyond bounds; it is not surprising that for the first time during the war he armed himself and went out to seek the life of an enemy. He took a revolver and sought the Governor's quarters, fully resolved to do justice on his body, and accept the consequences.

But Ching was on the alert. He was scared at the terrible form of Gordon's anger and contrived to give the Governor the alarm. Gordon boarded Li's boat, only to find that Li had taken refuge in the plundered

city. Thither he hastened in pursuit. Li, however, went into hiding, and though Gordon was 'hot and instant in his trace' for many days, he never came up with him. He had ordered up his troops to assist him in running the fugitive to earth; but when he found his efforts were in vain, he marched them back into quarters at Quinsan. There, with the deepest emotion, he read them an account of what had happened. He intimated to his officers that it was impossible for a British soldier to serve any longer under Governor Li; that he did not purpose to disband his force, but that he should hand it over to General Brown, the commander of the troops at Shanghai, until such time as the Government at Pekin should inflict on Li the punishment that was his due.

In his official investigation into the details of the massacre, Mr. Mayers discovered that it was doubtful whether the Futai and Ching ever intended to keep the engagement entered into. Whilst Li was panic-stricken about the numbers of rebel troops in the city, his colleague was secretly fearful lest Nar-Wang should eventually supplant him as commander, and had resolved to destroy him It appears, says Mr. Mayers in his despatch of December 14th, to Acting-Consul Markham, that the chiefs, on reaching the camp on the 6th instant, were received with friendly demonstrations by Li, who mentioned to each the decoration and

rank he was to expect from the throne, and then handed them over to General Ching, who held them in colloquy until the executioners suddenly rushed upon them. No sooner was this act committed than the order was given for the troops to rush into the city on the east side, in the hope of terrifying the rebels and driving them—as actually occurred—in panic through the western gates.*

So much was written at the time of this supreme crisis, so varying were the details recorded, that many will welcome Gordon's own account of the circumstances. He narrated them immediately after their occurrence, and told the part he played during these eventful days. This was in a memorandum on the events occurring between November 28th and December 6th, the day of the execution of the Wangs. On reading this, it becomes at once clear that Gordon had good reason to rely on faith being kept with the Wangs; nor can one fail to be struck by the persistency with which General Ching strove to confirm him in his belief.

'On the morning of the 28th November the headquarters were moved up from Waiquaidong to General Ching's stockades, and General Ching came to see me; he said that Kong-Wang had been to see him, and that he had proposed to come over with Nar-Wang, Pe-

* Blue Book, 'China,' No. 3.

Wang, Ling-Wang, and Such-Wang, thirty-five Tiench-Wangs, and three-fourths of the garrison of Soochow. General Ching asked me if I thought it a good thing; I told him that, with the small force at my disposal, it would be a far safer mode, and one more likely to bring the rebellion to a close, than if we had to take the city by assault. He said that Kong-Wang was desirous to get Moh-Wang out of the way with his troops, and proposed to shut him out of the city if we renewed our attack on the stockades from which we had been repulsed in our night attack.

'The attack of the 29th November has already been reported. After it General Ching came to me and told me that Nar-Wang had sent him a message to say that Chung-Wang had arrived at two o'clock a.m. on the 29th November, and had by his presence prevented the execution of their designs. General Ching came to me again on the 1st December, to tell me that Chung-Wang had left the city at three o'clock a.m., and that Nar-Wang would send out three Tiench-Wangs to him (General Ching) that evening. General Ching asked me to see them, which I did that evening in his boat, they having come into our lines. Some desultory conversation of no importance took place, and I left. On the morning of the 2nd December General Ching came to me again, and asked me if I would see Nar-Wang, whom he had agreed to meet that night; I said not unless there was any necessity for my doing so. He said he thought it would be a good thing, and finally urged me to go with him that night. I agreed to do so, and went up to the evacuated stockades off the North Gate. Nar-Wang arrived at nine o'clock p.m., and saw General Ching first. General Ching then asked me to come, which I did, and found Nar-Wang and two Tiench-Wangs whom I had previously seen in Ching's boat. Nar-Wang was

a man of medium height, dark complexion, and about thirty years of age, with a very intelligent and pleasing countenance. He was a native of Woopoo, and dressed simply in silk, with a black handkerchief on his head. His first expression after seeing me was that he wished me to help him, to which I replied that I should be most happy if he could inform me of the way I could do so.

'I should have mentioned previously that General Ching had told me that Nar-Wang had some difficulty about the Moh-Wang and his soldiers, and had proposed to General Ching that we should attack the city, and had promised that his men should remain neutral and wear white turbans, if their property and lives were spared. I therefore at once entered into this question with Nar-Wang, and told him that the proposition General Ching had spoken to me of was impracticable, that if the city was assaulted and taken the pillage would be universal, and I should be only deceiving him if I told him I could maintain the terms; that it would be better for him and his men to fight if they could arrange no other means, and that if they were desirous of coming over, and could make their terms with the Imperialists, they could give over one gate as a guarantee.

'He said he would consult the other Wangs, and see what could be done with respect to Moh-Wang and his men. I then asked him to delay as little as possible. He said he wanted to the 6th instant, and I told him that if General Ching asked me to wait I would do so. I then asked Nar-Wang to settle with Ching the terms of the compact. After having told him what I thought of the prospects of the rebellion, how anxious the foreign Governments were for the cessation of hostilities which led to nothing but misery

to the inhabitants, how I longed to make the rebels and Imperialists good friends, etc., etc., I took leave, and left Nar-Wang and General Ching to settle matters.

'I may here remark that the Imperialists had behaved very well in their negotiations with the rebels. The city of Chanzu had faith strictly kept with it, and the Mandarin camps were full of chiefs who had come over from time to time.

'I had, therefore, not the very remotest idea but that perfect faith would be kept with the Wangs. I expressed to Nar-Wang a hope that the negotiations might not be of much length, as I was apprehensive that Moh-Wang might hear of it. He replied that his men were sufficient to protect him, and that he did not care.

'On the morning of the 3rd December General Ching came to me. He was in high spirits, and told me that my interview with Nar-Wang had been most successful, and he thought there was no doubt of their coming out. He came to me again in the afternoon, and I told him that, after my heavy loss in officers and men on the 27th and 28th November, it could not be looked on as a certainty that I could take the city, as any hitch with the bridge, which was 70 yards long, might cause a repulse, and that therefore I looked on the Futai as bound to aid the negotiations with all his means. I saw the Futai immediately after, and told him he must show mercy to these people, to which he gladly assented. I was the more anxious for this as I knew the disorders which were sure to arise if we took the city, many Mandarins having been to me to request that the women, etc., might be protected, as they were so numerous.

'The morning of the 4th December General Ching came to me and told me that Nar-Wang had sent out

to say that he had arranged with the other Wangs to get Moh-Wang on the wall to see our preparations for the attacks which were daily going on, and that they would then throw him down, and have a boat with an escort to convey him to our side. I told General Ching that Moh-Wang must be my prisoner, to which Ching, who knew Moh-Wang before, gladly assented. I then went to the Futai, who was out. I saw Paon, the Mandarin, who owns most of the property around Soochow, and who is of very high rank; he said he would tell the Futai, and I then told him I had asked what I had power to take, and that he must not refuse. I had not returned to my boat five minutes before General Ching sent me two Frenchmen who had ridden out of Soochow. This was at four p.m. They said that an assembly of all the Wangs had taken place at Moh-Wang's palace at eleven o'clock a.m., and that after a great dinner they had offered up prayers and adjourned to the great hall of reception. They had all put on their crowns and robes of ceremony, and taken their seats on the raised daïs. Moh-Wang mounted his throne and commenced a long discourse, expatiating on their difficulties, and praising the Cantonese and Kwangzi rebels, saying the others were not trustworthy (it appeared afterwards that Moh-Wang had some idea of what was going on, and was anxious to try a *coup d'état* himself). Another Wang then got up, and the altercation became hotter and hotter, till Kong-Wang got up and took off his robes. Moh-Wang asked him what he was doing. He drew a short dagger and stabbed Moh-Wang in the shoulder. Moh-Wang called out and fell over the table; the other Wangs seized him and dragged him down from the daïs, and a Tiench-Wang cut off his head. The chiefs then

mounted their horses and rode off to their troops. The head of Moh-Wang was afterwards sent to General Ching.

'The Frenchmen said that Moh-Wang had been most anxious to see me for several days, that he had asked them to write to me and ask for an interview, he coming to see me in disguise.

'Nar-Wang told General Ching afterwards that my letters which I had written to him respecting coming to terms fell out from his (Moh-Wang's) pockets when they seized him, and I found them myself near the raised daïs.

'I should have mentioned before that Nar-Wang had told General Ching, the night of the 3rd December, that Chung-Wang had assembled the chiefs after his defeat, on the 29th November, and had proposed to them to vacate Soochow and Nankin and return to the south. Moh-Wang would not accede to it, as he hoped to hold the city, and had all his property there. The other Wangs, knowing of the negotiations, did not also entertain the idea. Another reason for Moh-Wang's holding out was that his father and mother were hostages at Nankin with Tien-Wang.

'On the morning of the 5th December there was some musquetry to be heard in the city, but it soon ceased, and General Ching advanced some of his men to the East Gate, while some of our men went to the North Gate; but I soon withdrew them, as I knew their propensities, and I then went to the Futai and asked him to give the men two months' pay, and let the force push on to Wusieh and Chan-chufu.

'He objected, although the troops had had no remuneration for any of the places that had fallen, and had had very hard and continuous fighting. I told

him I could not keep them in hand unless he assented, and gave him until three o'clock p.m., and after that time I could not remain in command. This was a hard fact, but both officers and men were of the same mind, and I had no option. I then went into the city, and passed down to Nar-Wang's house, and there met all the Wangs. I asked them if everything had gone on properly, and if they were content; they said yes, and appeared quite at ease. Their troops were in the streets, and everything appeared orderly. I then went down to Moh-Wang's palace, and tried to get his body buried, but the people would not touch it. I then went out to the troops who were under arms, and soon after General Ching came in on the part of the Futai to arrange terms. I referred him to the officers commanding regiments, but they could not agree. Ching then came to me and begged me to try and get the force to accept one month's pay. After some demur I determined on making the force accept, as night was coming on, and I was afraid of the troops within making an attack on the Futai, as also on the rebels in the city.

'I therefore assembled them, and addressing them I let them know that I had succeeded in obtaining one month's pay. The men made a slight disturbance, which was quickly quelled, and after one attempt to march down on the Futai, dismissed I left a guard on the Futai's boat that night, and being apprehensive of further trouble if the troops remained, I marched them back at 8 o'clock a.m. on the 6th December, and anticipating no further trouble with the men, I ordered the steamers *Tsatlee* and *Hyson* round to Wuhlungchaio, directing my chop to come up to the Pou-mün or South Gate. I then went into the city, to Nar-Wang's house, reaching it at 11.30 o'clock a.m. I had heard that the

Wangs had to go out to the Futai at 12 o'clock noon, and that then the city would be given over. I should mention that General Ching had told me on the afternoon of the 5th December that the Futai had written to Pekin respecting the capture of Soochow, and stating that he had amnestied the prisoners. At the Nar-Wang's house I met all the Wangs, with their horses saddled, to leave for the Futai. I took Nar-Wang aside and asked him if everything was all right. He said, "Yes." I then told him I had the intention of going to the Taho Lake to look for the *Firefly*. He said he was coming down to see me, and would like me to stop two or three days. I said, unless he thought there was an absolute necessity, the business I was going on was too important for me to stop; but that if he thought he had any reason for wishing me to stay, I would do so. He said "No," and I bid him and the other Wangs good-bye, and they all passed me a few minutes afterwards with twenty attendants going towards the Low-mün, or East Gate, on their way to the Futai.

'I went down to Moh-Wang's palace, andsaw General Ching's men come down to bury Moh-Wang's body according to my request. I then went on the East Gate, or Low-mün, to while away the time until the steamers got round to Wuhlungchaio, intending to go round the wall to the Pou-mün, or South Gate. Just as we arrived at the gate I saw a large crowd on the bank opposite the Futai's boat, and soon afterwards a large force of Imperialists came into the city and ran off to the right and left along the wall and into the city, yelling, as they usually do when they enter a vacated stockade, and firing off their muskets in the air. I remonstrated with the Mandarins and soldiers, as their conduct was liable to frighten the rebels, who might retaliate and cause a row. After a few minutes General

Ching came in, and I noticed he looked disturbed. I asked him eagerly if the interview was over and had been satisfactory. He said the Wangs had never come to the Futai. I said I had seen them going, and asked him what could have become of them. He said he did not know, but thought they might have run away. I asked him what could have induced them to do so. He said they had sent out to the Futai to ask to keep 20,000 men, and to have half of the city, building a wall inside; that Nar-Wang had said before that he wanted only 2,500, and that at another time he said he wanted no soldiers, but merely to retire home; that the Futai had objected to his demand, and that he had told him to go to the Tch-mün, and stockade his men outside that gate, and that he supposed Nar-Wang had taken alarm and gone off. He said further that Nar-Wang had sent to Chung-Wang for assistance. I asked him if he thought Nar-Wang and the other Wangs had gone back to the rebels. He said no; but they would go back to their own homes and live there. I did not feel very well satisfied, and asked Mr. Macartney, who was by, to go to Nar-Wang's house and see if he was there, and to re-assure him if he was alarmed at anything. General Ching was anxious I should not go; and as I had no suspicion, I went round the wall with him to the Pou-mün, which we reached at five o'clock p.m. I had frequently returned to the question of Nar-Wang, but found that both General Ching and my interpreter seemed to evade the questions. When I got to the Pou-mün, I told General Ching I should go no further, as I felt uncomfortable about Nar-Wang, and also heard volleys of musketry in the city, but not of any great amount. I asked General Ching what it was. He said there were some Kwangzi and Canton men who would not shave, and they were driving them out of the

city, having left two gates open for their retreat; but they were only frightening them out. General Ching then left, and I asked my interpreter what he thought of the state of affairs. He said that he thought the Imperialists, having got the city, did not care about keeping their agreement. I therefore decided on riding to Nar-Wang's house and seeing him if possible. I rode through the streets with my interpreter, which were full of rebels standing to their arms, and Imperialist soldiers looting. I went to Nar-Wang's palace, and found it ransacked. I met Nar-Wang's uncle, a second in command, and he begged me to come to his house and protect it. He then withdrew the female household of Nar-Wang and accompanied them to his house, where there were some thousand rebels under arms in a barricaded street. It was now dark, and having seen the state of affairs, I wished much for Nar-Wang's uncle to let my interpreter go, taking orders for the steamers to come round and take the Futai prisoner (as he, the interpreter, thought that the Futai had not yet beheaded the Wangs), and also an order to bring up my force. They unfortunately would not let my interpreter go, and I remained with them until 2 o'clock a.m. on the 7th, when I persuaded them to let him go and procure assistance. I had kept several bands from looting the house by my presence. About 3 a.m. one of the men who had gone out with the interpreter returned, and said that a body of Imperialists had seized the interpreter and wounded him. I was now apprehensive of a general massacre, as the man made me understand that the order I had sent had been torn up, and therefore went out to go to the Pou-mün to send by my boat additional orders, and also to look for the interpreter. I found no traces of him, and proceeding to the Pou-mün was detained an hour by the Imperialists. It was then

5 a.m., and I determined on proceeding for my guard to the Low-mün, or East Gate, hoping to be able to seize the Futai, and to get back in time to save the house of Nar-Wang's uncle.

'I got to the Low-mün at 6 a.m., and sent on my guard to the house. It was, however, too late, it had been ransacked. I then left the city and met General Ching at the gate. I told him what I thought, and then proceeded to the stockade to await the steamers. As I was still ignorant that the Wangs had been beheaded, I thought that they were prisoners, and might still be rescued if the Futai could be secured. When awaiting the steamers, General Ching sent down Major Bailey, one of the officers I had sent him to command his artillery, who told me that General Ching had gone into the city, and sat down and cried. He then, to alleviate his grief, shot down twenty of his men for looting, and sent Major Bailey to tell me he had nothing to do with the matter, that the Futai ordered him to do what he did, and that the Futai had ordered the city to be looted. I asked Major Bailey if the Wangs had been beheaded; he said that he had heard so; he then told me he had Nar-Wang's son in the boat and had brought him to me. The son came up and pointing to the other side said that his father and the Wangs had been beheaded there. I went over and found six bodies, and recognised Nar-Wang's head. The hands and bodies were gashed in a frightful way, and cut down the middle. Nar-Wang's body was partially buried. I took Nar-Wang's head, and just then the steamers were seen coming up. The Futai, however, had received some warning, and left for Soochow by some other route. I then went to his boat and left him a note in English informing him of what my intention had been, and also my opinion of his treachery. I regret to say

that ——— did not think fit to have this translated to him.

'The two steamers then left for Quinsan, and one was sent down with Prince F. de Wittgenstein to inform the General of the state of affairs; this officer had been with the force nearly a month, and had been informed in detail by me of the whole that had passed as above related.

'On the 8th December the Futai sent ——— to persuade me that he could not have done otherwise, and I blush to think that he could have got an Englishman to undertake a mission of such a nature.

'C. G. GORDON,

'Major Commanding.

'*December 12th*, 1863.

'P.S.—To continue. On the 8th December I started with an escort and a steamer to General Ching's stockade to obtain Nar-Wang's body and some of his family, who had been retained prisoners in General Ching's stockade. These I obtained, and also the body.

'General Brown arrived on the afternoon of the 9th, and took the protection of the force under his command. I had already spoken to the officers and got them to agree to leave the solution to the British General. The disgust and abhorrence felt by all of them was and is so great, as to lead me to fear their going over in mass to the rebels; but I have shown them that the sin would then be visited on the Chinese people, and not on the culprits who committed it. The rebels have no government at all, while the Imperialists can lay claim to some.

'C. G. GORDON.'

It will be observed that Gordon, according to his wont, omits all mention of the perilous position in which he was placed while in the hands of the Taipings during the night he passed at Nar-Wang's palace.

This is what Gordon wrote home from Quinsan a fortnight after the slaughter of the chiefs:

'You will be glad to hear we are all quietly back at Quinsan—not likely to move again for a very long time, if, in fact, we ever do. I have not time to give you any details of our fight at the East Gate or of the treachery at Soochow, and hope you will see the same in the papers. I have Nar-Wang's son. He is a very sharp young fellow, and very lively—about eighteen years old. His poor father was a very good Wang, and very far superior to any of the Imperialists I have met. You can have little idea of the regret I have for several reasons on account of the last affair. In the first place, if faith had been kept, there would have been no more fighting, as every town would have given in; in the next, we had accomplished the suppression of the rebellion with very little loss of life to rebels or Imperialists, and not much injury to the inhabitants, as our quick movements prevented the rebels devastating the neighbouring villages; in the next, if I had not seen Nar-Wang, he would not have come over; and, in the next, I fear that all my work has been thrown away. My only consolation is that everything is for the best. It is quite incomprehensible to me the reason which actuated the Futai; he must have known from his previous acquaintance with me of what a row would be produced,

and of what a personal risk he ran, for, when it happened, my troops were not two hours' march from him. I have sent H—— the *Friend of China*, which is somewhat abusive, and therefore you had better not see it, as well as the *North China Herald*. . . . I have just heard from Shanghai that the merchants, Chinese and foreign, are very irate with the Futai, and will go a great length to get him released.'

Soon after, Gordon arrived at head quarters with his force. General Brown visited him, and learnt what had happened at Soochow. The following is the account the General forwarded to Sir Frederick Bruce and Lord de Grey of this visit, and one he paid later to Li-Hung-Chang:

'The circumstances attending and preceding the occupation of Soochow by the Imperialists are so calculated to produce an impression on public opinion unfavourable to the line of policy adopted by her Majesty's Government in China, that I trust I need not apologize for entreating your most earnest consideration of the whole subject.

'I received the first intimation of events passing in Soochow by a hurried note from Major Gordon, which reached me during the forenoon of the 8th instant; a second note, which, although written previously, did not reach me until a later period, produced the impression that affairs were proceeding favourably, consequently I was so far from apprehending the gravity of the crisis, that I decided to carry out my intention of proceeding to Hong Kong by the mail-steamer, and was on board when Prince Wittgenstein, despatched by

Major Gordon in the steamer *Tsatlee*, brought a more complete and detailed narrative of events.

'The additional information thus received determined me to accede to the urgent entreaties of Major Gordon, of which the Prince was the bearer, and to proceed to Quinsan, the head quarters of Major Gordon's force, at once. I arrived at Quinsan about 3 o'clock, p.m., the following day, and immediately received from Major Gordon a report which differed but slightly from the more carefully compiled narrative enclosed. Major Gordon has been unable to express in writing the intense indignation and disgust with which the infamous and dastardly conduct of the Futai had inspired him.

'You will perceive by Major Gordon's narrative that he was unable to withdraw his force from before Soochow to Quinsan only under the formal promise from the Futai of one month's pay to the officers and soldiers, and that it required all his influence to prevail on them to accept these terms. The subsequent treachery of the Imperial authorities had, however, destroyed the confidence of all ranks; their cruelties had turned the sympathies of Europeans in favour of the rebels, and I found it necessary in order to restore discipline, and to avert a perhaps total defection of the force, to take Major Gordon and his force formally under my command.

'This move on my part, I am happy to inform your Excellency, had the best effect; all ranks now express their perfect satisfaction and reliance, and every symptom of hesitation has dissappeared from the force under Major Gordon's command.

'I considered it expedient to have an interview with the Futai, with the view of hearing any explanatory statement he might have to offer, and to communicate

to him my views on recent events, and explain the future relations between himself and Major Gordon.

'I therefore despatched the interpreter to the Consulate (Mr. Mayers), accompanied by two of my officers, to convey to him my desire for an interview.

'Having thus prepared the way, I proceeded the following day to Soochow, but was met at Ching's stockade by the Futai, who had come out from the city to meet me.

'I speedily ascertained that, though the Futai was prepared to take on himself the whole responsibility of the murder of the Wangs, and sacking of the city, and fully to exonerate Major Gordon from all blame, he was either unable or unwilling to offer any exculpation or explanation of his conduct, and it only remained for me to express my opinion and future intentions.

'This I did in as few words as possible. I expressed the indignation and grief with which the English people, together with all the civilized nations of the world, would regard his cruelty and perfidy. I exposed to him my views on the impolicy of a fruitless severity which paralyzed his friends, and drove the rebels to desperation, at the time when we had good reason to believe they were prepared to capitulate and return to their homes in peace. I then informed him that I should insist on the promised reward of one month's pay; that I deemed it my duty to refer the whole matter to our minister at Pekin; and that pending such reference, Major Gordon had received instructions from me to suspend all active aid to the Imperialist cause, further than protecting Soochow, knowing its importance to the safety of Shanghai; and warning the rebels to abstain from attacking his position, I concluded by expressing my unhesitating conviction that after what had occurred my Government would withdraw all

assistance hitherto afforded to the Imperial cause, recall Major Gordon and all English subjects serving under him, and disband the Anglo-Chinese force.'

For two months, pending the inquiry instituted on his demand at Pekin, Gordon remained in quarters. For many reasons his position was endangered by the inactivity of his troops. Governor Li in his despatches, while making highly honourable mention of Gordon's services, had taken to himself the credit which attached to the fall of Soochow. The truth was that the Commander of the Ever Victorious Army, taking post after post with his own troops, had garrisoned them as he took them with Imperialist forces in Li's command, and that to him was due all the strategy and all the fighting which led to the surrender. There yet remained some half-dozen cities in the rebel occupation. But with the fall of Soochow the backbone of the rebellion was broken; and, as the whole of the guns and munition which were captured in that siege were handed over to General Ching and put under the command of Major Bailey, one of Gordon's old officers, the Imperialists may have felt themselves now competent to reduce the remaining strongholds without assistance. This may have emboldened them to take up the independent position they assumed with regard to the causes of Gordon's wrath and the pertinence of Gordon's demand.

Matters connected with the execution of the chiefs

were in the hands of Major-General Brown at Shanghai, and Sir Frederick Bruce at Pekin; but before they could take cognizance of the affair, Li had sent his despatches to Pekin, and had received the congratulations of Prince Kung, together with the honour of the Yellow Jacket, which carries with it the highest military grade of the empire. This was on the 14th of December, 1863. Then an Imperial decree was issued, stating that Gordon, a Tsung-Ping (a Brigadier-General) of the province of Kiangsoo, in command of Li's auxiliary force, had displayed thorough strategy and skill, and put forth most distinguished exertions, and ordaining that a medal of distinction of the highest class be conferred upon him; and further, that he receive a donation of 10,000 taels in token of the Imperial approbation. A private decree, issued on the same day, enjoins the Governor to communicate this document to Gordon, and to provide and send him the donation. It also signifies that foreign nations already possess orders of merit under the name of stars, and that the decoration of the first class which is conferred on Gordon be arranged in accordance with their system.

This gift, with many other presents, was sent to Gordon by the Governor, together with extra pay for his troops, and sums of money for his wounded. The latter Gordon received; the former he indignantly refused. When the treasure-bearers entered his

presence, with bowls of bullion on their heads—like a train from the 'Arabian Nights'—he flogged them from the chamber with his 'magic wand.' The consternation was extraordinary. To refuse the Imperial treasure—to batoon the Imperial Envoys! If the sun had started from his sphere, they would have been less frightened and less amazed. This is the answer Gordon returned to the Imperial decrees:

'Major Gordon receives the approbation of his Majesty the Emperor with every gratification, but regrets most sincerely that, owing to the circumstances which occurred since the capture of Soochow, he is unable to receive any mark of his Majesty the Emperor's recognition, and therefore respectfully begs his Majesty to receive his thanks for his intended kindness, and to allow him to decline the same.'

On writing home a little later, Gordon thus refers to the honours which the Chinese Government desired to confer on him.

'To tell you truly, I do not want anything, either money or honours, from either the Chinese Government or our own. As for the honours, I do not value them at all, and never did. I know that I am doing a great deal of good, and, liking my profession, do not mind going on with the work under the circumstances which I have related in my letter to ———. I should have refused the 10,000 taels even if everything had gone well, and there had been no trouble at

Soochow. I am fully aware of the false step I took in writing my account of the Soochow transactions to the paper—not that anyone has told me so—but must say that allowances must be made for the disgust I felt. I know you feel for my position, which is no easy one, and am sure you are glad of my success. The rebels are a ruthless lot. Chung-Wang beheaded 2,000 unfortunates, who ran to him from Soochow, after the execution of the Wangs by the Futai. This was at Wusieh. I have read the Futai a lesson he will not forget.'

It was not difficult for Governor Li to make an impression on the Pekin Government, nor was it unnatural that the Emperor, in a new decree which was to be read by his people, should, in announcing the recent victories, give the pre-eminence to his own army and his own commander. In this document he set forth and acknowledged the services of the various high officers concerned. Li Hung Chang, he says, reports that the army under his command has captured the city of Soochow; that, acting under his orders, it has taken in succession the lines of rebel works outside the four gates of the city, and struck terror into the enemy; that General Ching has attacked the different gates of the city incessantly, and that Gordon has established himself close to the city walls, and opened a cannonade against them.

All this may be taken as a sample of Chinese history. Its truthfulness will appear the more questionable when

it is mentioned that Governor Li, while in person he was achieving all these great results before Soochow, was actually living at Shanghai, from which city he hardly ever stirred. Those who wished to know the truth, or those who wished to falsify it, held long newspaper discussions. The one set wrote history for the Chinese, the other, history for the world at large.

Defences of Li's conduct in the treatment of the Wangs were not wanting. These state that the Wangs were insolent and threatening, that the terms they proposed were such as would have imperilled the Imperialist cause, and that the Governor, as a patriot and a statesman, had nothing to do but put them to the sword. Whatever the truth of these statements of his, there is something to be said for his policy of ending the rebellion by cutting off its chiefs. But nothing can be advanced in palliation of his behaviour in making use of Gordon as a negotiator between himself and the men he had made up his mind to massacre.

CHAPTER VII.

FINAL VICTORIES.

The massacre at Soochow had placed Gordon in a position of unparalleled difficulty. To continue the campaign he had so brilliantly carried on, would be to endorse the conduct of his colleague; while to leave the rebellion to its fate, would be to undo all that had been done. Already his own force was showing signs of mutiny at the sudden suspension of hostilities, and sixteen of his officers had to be dismissed, while the rebel bands were fast gaining ground to the west of the fallen city. He knew that to waver was to fail; that on his action depended the lives of millions of innocent people. He therefore ignored the world's opinion, put aside his own feelings, and entered on terms of cordiality with Li Hung Chang once more.

The slaughter of the Wangs, unmerciful as it was and unnecessary, was an act not contrary to Chinese military law. As the excitement died away, and Gordon came to hear the Futai's explanation of what had transpired at the moment of their execution, he

was so far softened by it as to reconsider his position, and to question whether he was justified in abandoning the cause of humanity. So earnest was his desire to rid China of its cruel oppressors, and to relieve the suffering millions, that he felt the more what a calamity it would prove if the work so far achieved were thrown away. His force, disciplined in the main and attached to him, was above all things mercenary and ready to desert for better pay; and he was aware that this period of inactivity was demoralizing the men yet further, and that if he dissolved his little army, many would go over to the other side.

All this might undoubtedly have occurred; while, on the other hand, Gordon was convinced that, by resuming hostilities, he could in six months quash the rebellion: so it was that he chose to set aside private resentments, to communicate once more with the Futai, and to complete the work he had begun.

Mr. Hart, an Englishman of high standing, who was in China at the time, penetrated Gordon's views, and accurately described them. He wrote:

'The destiny of China is, at the present moment, in the hands of Gordon more than of any other man, and, if he be encouraged to act vigorously, the knotty question of Tai-pingdom versus "union in the cause of law and order" will be solved before the end of May, and quiet will at length be restored to this unfortunate and sorely-tried country.

'Personally, Gordon's wish is to leave the force as soon as he can. Now that Soochow has fallen, there is nothing more that he can do, whether to add to his own reputation or to retrieve that of British officers generally, tarnished by Holland's defeat at Taitsan. He has little or nothing personally to gain from future successes; and as he has himself to lead in all critical moments, and is constantly exposed to danger, he has before him the not very improbable contingency of being hit sooner or later. But he lays aside his personal feelings; and seeing well that, if he were now to leave the force, it would in all probability go at once to the rebels, or cause some other disaster, he consents to remain with it for a time.'

To make his way clear, Gordon paid a visit to Li-Hung-Chang at Soochow. There an arrangement was entered into that the Futai should issue a proclamation exonerating him from all participation in the massacre. His reasons for taking this step are fully explained in the following letter written to Sir Frederick Bruce after the Soochow conference:

Soochow, February 6th, 1864.

'My dear Sir Frederick Bruce,

'In consequence of the danger which will arise by my inaction (with the force any longer in a state of uncertainty), I have arranged with the Futai to issue a proclamation (which he will send to you), clearing me of any participation in the late execution of the Wangs, and have determined to act immediately.

'The reasons which actuate me are as follows:—I know of a certainty that Burgevine meditates a return

to the rebels; that there are upwards of 300 Europeans ready to join them, of no character, and that the Futai will not accept another British officer if I leave the service; and therefore the Government may have some foreigner put in, or else the force put under men of Ward's and Burgevine's stamp, of whose action at times we should never feel certain.

'I am aware that I am open to very grave censure for the course I am about to pursue; but in the absence of advice, and knowing as I do that the Peking authorities will support the Futai in what he has done, I have made up my mind to run the risk. If I followed my own desire, I should leave now, as I have escaped unscathed, and been wonderfully successful. But the rabble called the Quinsan force is a dangerous body, and it will be my duty to see that it is dissolved as quietly as possible, and that while in course of dissolution it should serve to benefit the Imperial Government.

'I do not apprehend the rebellion will last six months longer if I take the field. It may take six years if I leave, and the Government does not support the Imperialists. I propose to cut through the heart of the rebellion, and to divide it into two parts by the capture of Yesing and Liyang.

'If the course I am about to pursue meets your approbation, I shall be glad to hear; but if not, shall expect to be well rebuked. However, I know that I am not actuated by personal considerations, but merely as I think will be most conducive to the interests of our Government.

'The Futai does not want the force to move against Nanking, I imagine, as Tseng Kwo-fan has the wish to capture it himself.

'The Futai, if he is to be believed, has some ex-

tenuating circumstances in his favour for his action, and although I feel deeply on the subject, I think that we can scarcely expect the same discernment that we should from a European Governor.

'This letter will relieve you from any responsibility on this matter; and thanking you very much for your kind letter, which I will answer shortly.

'I am, etc.

'C. G. GORDON.

'P.S.—If you would let the matter drop, and make me responsible for my action in the matter, I think it would be more conducive to our good relations with the Peking Government than pressing them to punish or degrade the Futai.'

The proclamation referred to was issued on February 14th. I give it *in extenso*. It will be seen that Li not only clears Gordon of all blame, but states his motives for the course he had pursued.

'The Ever-Victorious Force, since the command was taken by General Gordon, has assisted with uniform success in the operations against the rebels, and the Futai has on repeated occasions obtained decrees of approbation for its services in reply to his memorials to the throne. At the time when the rebel Kao, falsely known as the Nar-Wang, and his associates were summarily put to death, the overthrow of settled arrangements was imminent from one moment to another, and General Gordon, not being on the spot, could not be cognizant of the circumstances involved. He was thus led to conceive that the course of action adopted was in opposition to the agreement previously entered into;

and now, as both Chinese and foreigners appear to attach credence to mere rumours, and are ignorant that the Futai's intentions, although seemingly at variance with those of General Gordon, were in fact identical with them, it behoves him to remove all doubt upon this subject by the issue of one distinct proclamation. The facts to be stated are these:

'At the moment when the operations against Soochow were on the point of being crowned with success, the rebel Kao and his associates, finding themselves in straits, besought permission to surrender. A great distinction existed between this act and the submission tendered before the arrival of the besieging force by the rebel garrisons of Nawei, Changshu, and other places. When General Gordon obtained the Futai's consent to admit them to surrender, in order to avert the slaughter that must ensue upon the storming of the city, it was from a desire to spare the myriads of the population, and not simply with the wish at all hazards to secure the lives of the rebel Kao and his associates. Still less can it be said that when once the agreement was entered into, no alteration was possible, so that these men could have been empowered, in tendering their submission, to enforce claims on their own behalf, and in despite of all, be still held as pardoned, whilst their rebellious tendencies were arising afresh! This principle is perfectly clear, and both the law of China and foreign practice are identical upon this point, respecting which there can be no doubt.

'At first, in the negotiations for the submission for the murder of the so-styled Moh-Wang, the surrender of the North-east Gate, and the fixing of a time for their interview at the camp, every step was known to General Gordon; but on his arrival at the camp, the so-styled Nar-Wang had not shaved his head, and his rebellious

designs were patent to view. He both refused to disband his men, and insisted on their being enrolled in the army, to the number of several tens of battalions, and further urged the demand that the ranks of Brigadier-General, etc., should be obtained from the throne for his adherents, who were to be left at the head of their men as garrison for Soochow. Not only was no sign of contrition evinced, but, on the contrary, there was a design of preparing the way for an eventual return to rebellion. Whilst his speech was evasive and ambiguous, his expression of countenance was ferocious and bold to an extreme; and all this took place after the surrender had been completed. The Futai could, therefore, for his own safety, do no otherwise than guard against a [dangerous] departure from the arranged conditions; and these were all particulars with which General Gordon was not acquainted. As regards the outset, when the Futai agreed with General Gordon to accept the submission of these men he had no conception that hesitation would take place at the last moment; and with respect to subsequent occurrences, the signs of danger were disclosed in a single instant, when, if no action could have been taken until after communicating with General Gordon, not only would it have become too late, but all the advantages secured would have been sacrificed. Supposing that the Futai had adhered rigidly [to his agreement], so that these few bandits had been enabled to ensure their own safety and resort to rebellious practices, it was many tens of thousands who would have suffered by the consequent misfortune; and the result would have been far from what was contemplated when first these men were admitted to surrender. Fortunately, however, by a summary decision at the vital instant, by which these few bandits only were put to death, and the mass of their followers scattered to the

winds, benefit was secured to the same vast number of the people, whom to protect was the main object held in view.

'From first to last what was aimed at was the prevention of slaughter in the moment of victory at Soochow; and therefore has the Futai said that his intentions, though seemingly at variance, were in reality identical with those of Major Gordon. When, in fact, on the 6th of December, the so-styled Nar-Wang came with his associates to the camp, General Gordon, having previously looked upon the matter as securely settled, did not accompany them; and, after the occurrence, he returned to Quinsan. He was thus both not an eye-witness to what actually occurred on the spot, and he was misled by the rumours which were spread abroad after the affair had taken place. He was impressed with the conviction that, the terms of surrender having been agreed to, the subsequent execution of the individuals was a breach of the convention entered into; but he was totally unaware of the pressing urgency and extreme danger of the consequences involved, which left not an instant for delay, and which led the Futai to inflict at once the penalty prescribed by military law.

'The Futai has already written a minute account of the circumstances to the Board of Foreign Affairs for communication to the Foreign Ministers; and, in addition to this, he now publishes this proclamation for the information of Chinese and foreigners alike.

'He will take stringent measures to prohibit the circulation of false and inflammatory reports.

'Tung-Chih, 3rd year, 1st moon,
7th day (February 14, 1864).'

Prince Kung and his Government could not be made to see that Li had acted otherwise than in the interests

of his country. It was not to be expected either that at the dictation of foreigners Kung would recommend the dismissal of a high Chinese official. Nevertheless, Sir Frederick Bruce obtained a promise from the Chinese Government, that, when employing a foreign officer, they should strictly observe the rules of warfare as practised among foreign nations. This being done he gave his approval and support to Gordon on his resuming operations, and wrote him as follows:

'My concurrence in the step you have taken is founded in no small measure on my knowledge of the high motives which have guided you while in command of the Chinese force, of the disinterested conduct you have observed in pecuniary questions, and of the influence in favour of humanity you exercised in rescuing Burgevine and his misguided associates from Soochow. I am aware of the perseverance with which, in the face of serious obstacles and much discouragement, you have steadily pursued the pacification of the province of Kiangsoo, in relieving it from being the battlefield of the insurrection, and in restoring to its suffering inhabitants the enjoyments of their homes and the uninterrupted exercise of their industry, and you may console yourself with the assurance that you are rendering a service to true humanity, as well as to great material interests. It would be a serious calamity and addition to our embarrassments in China, were you compelled to leave your work incomplete, and were a sudden dissolution or dispersion of the Chinese force to lead to the recurrence of that state of danger and anxiety from which, during the last two years, Shanghai has suffered.

I approve of your not awaiting the result of the inquiry into the Futai's proceedings at Soochow, provided you take care that your efforts in favour of humanity are not in future defeated by Chinese authorities.'

This letter was followed by another, which was of a more private nature, and exhibits a large view of the situation, as regards both Chinese and British interests.

'I only yesterday received your letter telling me that you had again taken the field. I have not yet seen the Governor's proclamation, but I have obtained a positive promise in writing from this Government, that in cases of capitulations where you are present, nothing is to be done without your consent; and I will inform the Prince of Kung that it is upon the faith of this engagement that you are authorized to act. If it is observed, scenes like that of Soochow will not be repeated, and the interests of humanity will have the benefit of you as a protector, instead of being committed to the unchecked mercies of Chinese officials.

'I do not ask for the Governor's dismissal. I confined myself in the first instance to asking for an inquiry to which he was entitled before being punished, and to supporting you in the course you had taken. If he has been generally successful as Governor, it is not to be expected that this Government would venture to remove him for an act with respect to which they are more impressed by the extenuating circumstances than by the treachery. In the decree condemning Shung Pow to death, one of the chief charges against him was that he had pardoned some rebel leaders who a year afterwards rose again in insurrection. If it be true that the chiefs of Soochow insisted upon a quasi-indepen-

dent command, which would virtually have left Soochow in their power, and would have enabled them to take advantage of any favourable circumstance to begin again their career of pillage, I can understand that Governor Li shrank from the responsibility of granting such terms to them, and preferred treating them as contumacious, and setting the Government at defiance by their attitude and by their demands. Such a proceeding, though abhorrent to our ideas, can hardly be termed a gross and deliberate act of treachery.

'It is impossible for us to change suddenly the ideas and conduct of the Chinese; and the Taitsan affair showed that the Tai-pings were not one whit more advanced in good faith than the Imperialists. But the interests of trade and of the population of China demand the restoration of peace and tranquillity, and we do a good act in assisting the Government with that view. If this insurrection continues in force in the sea-board provinces, I see a great danger not far off arising from filibusters and corsairs.

'Burgevine is a Southerner, the trading interests of America in China are Northern, and Burgevine attributes his treatment to the British authorities at Shanghai. It would not surprise me if he and the *Alabama*, etc., were to make common cause with the insurgents, and then, you may depend upon it, they would directly attack the foreign settlements, where most plunder is to be had. You will do well to urge the Governor to take measures, either by steamers or by batteries, to prevent lorchas or armed vessels going up the Yangtsze river. It might be easy for a force of these adventurers to raise the siege of Nanking, and then advance again on the province of Kiangsoo. It will depend much on his future conduct and on the readiness he shows to adopt good suggestions, how far

I press the affair of Soochow. I am not implacable where offences are not repeated.

'I beg you to do nothing rash under the pressure of excitement, and, above all, to avoid publishing in newspapers accounts of your differences with the Chinese authorities. We have supported this Government from motives of interest, not from sentiment; and as our interests remain the same, we must endeavour to get over our difficulties without taking any steps which would neutralize all the results of the policy we have hitherto pursued, and which you have carried out so successfully. In the resolution you have now come to you are acting wisely and rightly, and you may depend on my lightening your responsibility by giving you the most cordial official support. Fortunately, I have not committed myself with respect to Li so far as to make it difficult for me to be friends with him, provided he gives rise to no more scandals, and deals with foreigners and foreign interests so as not to give grounds for complaint. If you think it expedient, you may hint this to him.

'The objects we ought to keep in view are to restore order in Kiangsoo and Chekiang, to cut off the insurgents from communication with filibusters, and to reduce gradually the disciplined corps, so that it may not become a source of danger. If the Chinese will put down piracy and stop vessels not conforming to the regulations limiting arms, etc., I will direct the gunboats to support them. But vessels under foreign flags can only be searched by a Chinese authority; and all we can do is to support him if he is resisted in trying to search.'

On the 19th February, 1864, Gordon took the field once more. There was yet much work to be done, for

the western half of the rebel country was still in the hands of the Tai-pings, and defended by hordes of broken and desperate men.

A line drawn from Soochow westward, passing in a wavy direction through Ye-sing, Liyang, and Kin-tang, and leaving Nanking at the upper extremity, and Hangchow at the base, cuts this country in half. Gordon at once directed his attention to this central line, leaving a Franco-Chinese force, under Captain d'Aiguibelle, to operate against Hangchow, and the Imperialists under one of the Mandarins to reduce Nanking.

Far greater difficulties attended him than he had hitherto experienced. He was going into the enemy's country with none of the resources which had been previously at his command. His easy communication with Shanghai had secured him an abundance of munitions and stores; supplies could now no longer be had from that quarter; and his force had to carry with them enough for their consumption in the field. With this extra encumbrance, he started from Quinsan in snow and hail. He marched to Woosieh; but the city was in so ruinous a state that no quarters could be found, and at the recommendation of his guide he led his men to a small village at the foot of a hill. Here he was met by an old woman, who came out from a large pagoda, and told him that, some two months

before, four 'barbarians' like themselves had been killed at the foot of the pagoda. She led the way to a paved yard, and there Gordon witnessed a sight as horrible as that of the headless chiefs at Soochow. In a grave—the way to which was strewn with fragments of burnt bones, a pen-knife, and rags and scraps of clothing—were four charred skeletons; and Gordon saw that the murder of the chiefs had been avenged. A mystery had for some time hung about the fate of an Imperialist steamer, the *Firefly*, officered by four Europeans. These men, it now turned out, had fallen into the hands of Chung-Wang, the Faithful King, who, it will be remembered, had played a considerable part in those consultations which led to the fall of Soochow. Before the surrender he had escaped with his army to Nankin; on his way to the city he had learned the fate of his brother chiefs, and had captured the four Europeans, tortured and burned them to death, and left their remains near the pagoda where they were now found. It was the first instance that came to light of any ill-treatment of foreigners by the rebels, and the murder may be fairly attributed to Li-Hung-Chang's treatment of the Wangs. This at least was the common opinion; and it was generally regretted that Gordon should again have taken the field in conjunction with the Futai, inasmuch as the discovery of the murdered men afforded fair ground for inferring that he was held

responsible by the Tai-pings for the massacre at Soochow.

It was a melancholy march from Woosieh to Yesing. The country had been depopulated by the rebels, and the few poor wretches who still haunted its fields were dying of starvation. Yesing was a small city, about two miles in circumference, surrounded by walls and a broad, but not very formidable, ditch. A reconnoitring party which had been sent out, however, was soon driven away by an accurate fire from the ramparts. Gordon therefore determined to cross the lake on the eastern side, where the *Hyson* was expected, seize its outworks, and so cut the communications between the city and Liyang. His first step was to capture an outlying village, which, as he said, was a piteous sight to behold. Robbed by the Tai-pings of their last means of subsistence, the people had been brought to feed on the bodies of their dead. It is not surprising that, as soon as the East Gate was taken, the mass of the population instantly quitted the city, and that the rebels made no effectual resistance. A few shells were thrown in by the troops as they advanced to the assault, and many of the garrison took to their heels and ran. They fell back into some forts outside the South Gate, where they were reinforced by a contingent from Liyang. This enabled them to take the field in considerable force, and there was some sharp

skirmishing outside the walls. Gordon, however, dealt with the newcomers very summarily indeed. Amusing them with a distant fire of musketry in front, he flung some 1,500 men—round some neighbouring hills—upon them in the rear. The rebels fled, and were pursued with great slaughter. During the night many escaped from Yesing, which surrendered next day, those who remained shaving their heads in token of submission.

Yesing capitulated on the 1st of March—eleven days after Gordon had left Quinsan, ten of them spent on the road. A few hours after, news came in that 3,000 Tai-pings in garrison at Tajowka, a town on the Taho Lake, were desirous of coming over to the Imperialists; but that the rebel Captain, with 1,000 desperadoes of his own temper, had sworn to fight it to the last. Gordon at once proceeded to Tajowka. There on the 3rd of March, he completely quelled the bolder spirits among the garrison; and he brought the willing 2,000 back with him to Yesing.

On March 5th he advanced against Liyang, with a repetition of the difficulties that constantly beset him in the command of troops with no heart in the cause but the heart to plunder. When he absolutely forbade his men to enter Yesing, they showed symptoms of insubordination, which had to be repressed by picking a man out and shooting him on parade. Of course the

starving villagers were allowed to enter the city and to take out rice for food. At Liyang the rebels were disheartened, and they yielded almost without a protest. The Commandant had intended to defend the place. On the approach of the attacking force he sallied forth to meet them with part of his army, but the others shut the gates upon him, and compelled him to surrender. Bearing in mind the disasters and confusion attendant on the sacking of Soochow, Gordon sternly refused to allow the Mandarin troops to enter the city. Posting his own guards at the Gate, to prevent bloodshed and pillage, he now pursued his march northward towards Kintang. The tidings of his approach struck terror into the garrison, and it instantly prepared to surrender. Suddenly, however, it was largely reinforced from Chanchu-fu, so that Gordon had to endure a repulse. The garrison having expressed its willingness to surrender, would have done so had the Imperialists performed their task of keeping Chanchu-fu in check, as they had undertaken to do, while Gordon attacked Kintang; now Kintang, which would have fallen without a blow, was held by the most desperate of the rebels—men brave, but cruel beyond anything ever recorded by their opponents.

Gordon brought his forces to within 1,200 yards of the walls. He fixed on the north-east angle as the best point of attack, and under cover of night he

stationed near it a flotilla of heavy boats with artillery. Everything was ready, when despatches came in from Governor Li with disastrous news. Some 7,000 rebels, under Chung-Wang's son, had left Chanchu-fu, and had turned the flank of the Imperialists; they were threatening Woosieh; they had captured Fushan; and they were now besieging Chanzu, only thirty miles from the head-quarters and depôt of the Ever-Victorious Army.

Startling as this news was, Gordon felt that to abandon the attack of Kintang would be to afford great encouragement to the rebels. He accordingly opened fire, and in three hours made a breach in the walls; but whenever his stormers appeared, the Tai-pings crowded to the breach, swarmed on the ramparts, and hurled down every sort of missile. This so intimidated the crews of Gordon's gun-boats that they could not be got to advance, and the stormers were driven back. The troops were therefore withdrawn and re-formed. The Artillery cleared the breach at once, but a second storming party was repulsed, and Major Kirkham was severely wounded. Gordon, who himself led the assaults, was shot through the leg. One of his body-guard cried out that the Commander was wounded; but Gordon silenced him, and stood giving orders till he nearly fainted from loss of blood. Still he would not retire, and Andrew Moffit, Principal Medical Officer to the

force, came out and carried him by main force into his boat. Even then Gordon struggled to get away. The stormers sustained heavy losses. Major Brown,* Gordon's aide-de-camp, headed a third assault, and carried his Commander's flag into the breach; but the attack failed, and he too was wounded.

Gordon, having no fresh regiments on hand with which to make another effort, withdrew without further loss, the troops resuming their former positions. It was found that 100 of the assailants were killed and wounded, among them were 15 officers, two of whom, Major Taite and Captain Banning, lost their lives.

When the news of Gordon's wound—the first and only one he got—was known, much anxiety was naturally evinced as to what would be its effect on the campaign. The Emperor, it is said, was sadly grieved. He at once issued the following proclamation:

'Li-Hung-Chang reports that General Gordon some time since started from Liyang to attack Kintang. He carried with him mortars to breach the walls. At the attack he was wounded in the leg; Li has therefore recommended him to remain at rest. Such is the despatch. Now, Gordon being excessively brave and fearless, was wounded in consequence. We are on this account deeply moved with grief and admiration. On the other hand, we are informed that the wound is not

* Son of General Brown, commanding H.M. forces in China.

serious. We order Li-Hung-Chang to visit Gordon and inquire for him daily, so as to keep his mind at rest, requesting him to wait until he shall be perfectly restored to health and strength. Respect this!'

Li's instructions to keep Gordon's mind at rest were more easily issued than carried out. Even Dr. Moffit's influence was of no avail; and before long Gordon returned with his men to Liyang. Here more bad news awaited him. The Faithful King himself had occupied Fushan, his first conquest. He was bodily disabled by his wound, but on hearing this he started forthwith for Woosieh. Leaving the greater portion of his force in garrison behind him under General Li-Adong, he proceeded with his light artillery and a regiment only 400 strong, together with 600 Liyang men, all Taipings only a few days before, who had willingly enlisted to take part against their former masters. At this point, Dr. Wilson remarks, and Colonel Chesney echoes him: One scarcely knows here whether most to admire the pluck or to wonder at the confidence of the wounded commander!

On reaching Woosieh, Gordon found despatches of a more promising kind. The enemy had been driven back from that place; Chanzu continued to hold out, though Fushan had been retaken; and the Imperialists still held the stockades before Chanchu-fu. Advancing at once about ten miles to the south-west, he drove the rebels

before him, and cut off the retreat of Chung-Wang's son, who had already been defeated at Chanzu. In spite of his wound and weakness, he still pushed on through a district where not only had the wretched inhabitants been plundered and butchered, but their villages burned by their rapacious rulers. After driving the rebel force away from three of these burning villages, he halted for the night. A most anxious night it was, for until dawn the enemy was firing on his sentries, and trying hard to ride through the lines of his little force. In the morning Gordon drove the rebels out of a village in front of his position; but he had to retire in the face of a large force which came down on his boats. Of this body, however, he managed to cut off and separate a part from the rest, and these were bayoneted, while the others were driven, under fire of a howitzer, across a bridge. Reaching a range of hills near Chanchu, he thrust the rebels over them before him, and concentrated his troops to operate against the left of the rebel line. The rapidity of these movements —which dealt with a vast expanse of country strewn with the dead and the dying—was extraordinary.

'A terrible picture is drawn of the desolation of the country, and the misery of the inhabitants,' wrote one who was not far from the scene. 'Hundreds of gaunt, starving wretches, with hardly any other means of sustenance than human flesh, and

the few scraps of refuse they can pick up from the Imperialist troops, wander hopelessly about, more dead than alive, amid the ruins of their villages and of the suburbs. The living are too weak to bury the dead, and the latter lie about on the ground in every stage of decomposition, tainting the air and horrifying the beholder.' A correspondent writing from the camp, says: 'It is horrible to relate; it is horrible to witness. To read that people are eating human flesh is one thing; to see the bodies from which the flesh has been cut is another. No one can eat a meal here without a certain degree of loathing. The poor wretches have a wolfish look that is indescribable, and they haunt one's boat in shoals in the hope of getting some scraps of food. Their lamentations and moans completely take away any appetite which the horrors one has witnessed may have left one. I ought to be tolerably callous by this time, but no one could witness unmoved such scenes as these. The rebels have evidently swept up everything edible, and left the unfortunate inhabitants to die.'

Gordon took advantage of the water system, which was good and complete, to command from his boat. In her he lay disabled, accompanied by the flotilla which held his artillery. The Tai-pings, who had issued out of Chanchu-fu, had taken a bend towards the shore of the Yang-tse, and had resolved on getting

possession of Quinsan. The centre of this movement was at Waissoo. Gordon, alive to the advantage of sometimes dividing his forces, advanced by water on that place with his artillery, while he sent Colonels Howard and Rhode by land, with orders to incline to the right before reaching the rebel stockades, and there to join his boats. But new troubles were in store for him. The infantry on the 31st of March stumbled on the Tai-pings' camp, which was strongly stockaded and entrenched. The officers committed an unfortunate mistake in the distribution of their little force by separating it; the consequence was that the Tai-pings, who had a large body of cavalry in ambush, came forth from their hiding-places in thousands, and struck panic among the men. The newly-raised Liyang regiment fled, together with the 4th, which was the best regiment of the Ever-Victorious Army. The greatest confusion prevailed; 400 soldiers were either killed or taken prisoners; three captains were killed or captured, and afterwards decapitated or subjected to mutilation.

When Gordon reached the enemy's position with his artillery, he found himself unsupported and in great danger, inasmuch as when the enemy came out to the attack, owing to the steepness of the banks, he was unable to fire upon them. Nothing was left him but retreat upon his own encampment. Here everything

was in the utmost disorder, the enemy having pursued his land forces up to his very tents. This calamitous affair incensed him greatly against the surviving officers, for not having kept proper reserves, and for neglecting to look to their flanks. To these mistakes they owed their defeat by a mere rabble, armed with spears and knives.

These events entailed some loss of time. Gordon had once more to reorganize his force. He did so by withdrawing to Si-yangchow, about thirteen miles to the south-west. He then ordered up his 3rd regiment; and having spent some days in working his demoralised troops into discipline and order, he encamped once more near Waissoo, where he was joined by Li-Hung-Chang, who had come from Soochow with some 6,000 Imperials.

Elsewhere the Imperialist forces had meanwhile been doing good service. General Ching had been operating to the south, and Tso, with the Franco-Chinese, assisted by Colonel Bailey, whom Gordon had given him for artillery instruction, had been engaged in investing Hangchow. In storming Kashing-fu Ching had killed two of the chiefs, but was himself wounded in the head by a bullet, from the effects of which he died. The Franco-Chinese, under D'Aiguibelle, had made an attack on Hangchow, in combination with Tso's Imperialists, and, after some repulses, due to a

bad choice of points of attack, had succeeded in capturing the city. After this the Taï-pings evacuated place after place, and finally fell back on the south-west corner of the Taho Lake, which was thus almost entirely clear of them. Many took refuge in the mountains, whither the Imperialists did not care to follow them, knowing that in those sterile regions starvation would be their certain end.

Gordon was keenly affected by the death of General Ching, and shed tears when it was announced to him. As we have seen, the relations existing between the two commanders were not of the cordial description which characterizes those of men of the same nationality. Ching had his own part to play before his own Government; and, taking a liberal view of his conduct, much that he did to promote his own glory when he had the opportunity, must be overlooked, in consideration of his many high qualities. When Gordon had successfully carried out assaults and taken stockades and fortified towns, Ching was ready at all times to garrison them with his troops, and to hold them, while Gordon pressed on with his artillery and disciplined troops to make new conquests. General Ching was a man of undaunted courage and of sound judgment in all matters relating to the conflict in which he was engaged. He did not die immediately from the effect of his wound;

indeed, for a time he was restored to consciousness, and his mind grew perfectly clear. According to Li-Hung-Chang he passed this interval in earnest thoughts of what was yet to happen, though fully convinced that his death was near at hand. Addressing his colleague, he said that although the rebels had been defeated, their strength was still not to be despised, and he begged him to order the officers to be careful in battle. He remarked that brave men were not easily found, and he bitterly regretted his own fate, by which he was prevented from doing his duty to his country. Later, while gradually sinking, he called his servant and ordered him to bring the yellow jacket presented to him by the Emperor, and to assist him on with it. He then bowed his head towards the Imperial Palace. His last act was to send the Superintendent of the Camp to his colleague, Li, with a message entreating him to follow out his design and exterminate the rebels wherever he found them.

From Li's record of him, it appears that General Ching, who, having been formerly among the rebels, knew their mode of thought, had strongly urged the execution of the chiefs at Soochow. 'Cut off the heads of their leaders,' he said, 'and their myriads of followers will instantly subside into insignificance. You will thus secure the tranquillity of the city. Their crimes,' he said, 'have been outrageous; their punish-

ment should be proportionately severe.' On this same authority it is stated that so highly did Gordon value General Ching, that he begged Governor Li to give him the dead captain's battle-flags, that he might bear them to his own country and thus preserve the memory of one he loved so well. Gordon is always unwilling to converse on the past; and when a near relative of his brought him Ching's portrait, he would not look at it, but turned away in great agitation.

By the 6th of April Gordon had nearly recovered from his wound, and had brought his augmented force to bear on Waissoo, taking up his position on the south-east. The Imperialist troops were well disposed on the south-west. To the north-west was Kongyin, now in the hands of the Imperialists, and on the Yang-tse River, to the north, were the Imperialist fleets. Farther, all the bridges past Kongyin had been broken, but in such a fashion that the rebels still imagined that the road was open for retreat. Gordon, advancing with great caution upon Waissoo, found it surrounded by strong stockades and breast-works. His first step was to open fire, by way of feint, from his 24-pounder howitzers, while he moved his 4th Regiment and two mounted guns to the north, which was really the weakest side of the city. The Tai-pings were thus taken by surprise, fully believing that the direction from which the howitzers

were fired was to be the only point of attack. The result of this manœuvre was that the stockades on the north were quickly taken, and the rebels, for their own safety, instantly vacated the place. They retreated as best they could into the country, where Li, now engaged in active operations, drove them towards the broken bridges. Next day Gordon took up the pursuit. Then the villagers came forth, armed with rude weapons of every kind. Their rice had been plundered and their cottages had been burned, and they attacked the Tai-pings with the utmost fury, and slaughtered them without mercy. The town was full of stolen rice. But they had the satisfaction of knowing that two of the chief rebel Wangs were caught and put to death.

Though these successes dealt almost a final blow to the rebellion, there was still much to be done against forces so large. Only, indeed, by superior strategy was their complete destruction possible even at this period. The next place of attack was to be Chanchu-fu, which the Imperialists had been besieging for a considerable time without making any impression on it; indeed, it was thought the troops were willing to delay its capture on the ground that with its fall the rebellion would collapse and their services be brought to a close. Their sentiments throughout the campaign were those of mercenaries. So slow, in fact, were

the military Mandarins in their operations against the place, where they had been quartered three months, that Li was fain to threaten them with degradation.

When Gordon reached Chanchu-fu, with his 3,000 disciplined troops, he impressed upon Li the importance of wholly investing the city. It held a large force, he urged, of the most desperate among the rebel band; and if these escaped they would spread devastation over the neighbouring districts, and develop into new centres of revolt. But the Imperialist troops were still unwilling to end the campaign in too great a hurry. This was shown in an unmistakable manner at midnight on the 25th of April. There is no way of explaining what then happened, except on the supposition that a deep and preconcerted scheme was laid to put an end to Gordon, who as they knew would take the city by a *coup de main*. He and his artillery officer, Major Tapp, were superintending the construction of a battery. The work was being done by a party of Imperialists, supported by a strong picket on both sides, and by a covering party in the rear. The work was nearly completed when the picket on the left fired into the battery, and on this the covering party also fired into it—an act which was followed by a second volley from the left. This roused the Tai-pings, who in their turn directed their guns on the same point, so that those who were engaged at the battery were in

the centre of a fire from the enemy in front and from their own troops in flank and rear. Many of the sappers were killed and wounded. Major Tapp received a ball in the stomach and died in a few minutes. Gordon escaped unhurt, and proved anew that his was a charmed life.

The loss of such a man as Major Tapp, at this pass, was a calamity equal almost to the loss of a battle. He was a singularly energetic and courageous man, and his influence over the force was greater than that of any other officer.

The habitual savagery of the Tai-pings was manifested in the preliminary fighting. Some of the soldiers who wanted to quit the city had escaped to the walls; they were retaken and beheaded on the ramparts as an example to others who might have it in their minds to desert. Li-Hung-Chang, it is to be noted, was most eager to distinguish himself, and to take Chanchu-fu for himself with his own troops. He accordingly ordered Colonel Bailey, in command of the artillery under Ching, to open fire and breach the wall between the South and West Gates, while Gordon's artillery played upon the town. He then made the assault alone, and was repulsed with great loss. The next day, Li, finding that Gordon had completed his batteries at the south-east angle of the wall, agreed that they should open fire. He also

arranged that a body of Imperialists should join the Ever-Victorious Army in the assault. But when Gordon went forward to the attack the Imperialists were wanting. The rebels manned the walls in great numbers, led by Hu-Wang, or 'Cock Eye,' as he was called, in person; the resistance was desperate, and the burden fell on Gordon's men. Ten or twelve officers succeeded in mounting the breach, but the rebels outnumbered them, and the force had to be recalled. Li, deeply disappointed with the issue of his manœuvre, sent round to Gordon, entreating him to renew the assault. This was done, and a combined movement was made at the two points of the breached wall. But the Tai-pings were desperate, and set no sort of value on their lives. The artillery played on them with shell and canister, but no sooner was one party blown away than another took its place. Colonels Cawte, Howard, and Chapman, Captain Winstanley, and other officers, reached the crest of the breach; but the men hung back, and the retreat was sounded. The loss of officers was very great; 19 were wounded, while Colonel Morton, Captains Rhode, Hammond, Donald, and Smith, together with Lieutenants Brown, Gibb, Chowerie, Robinson, and Williamson were killed.

Gordon declined to expose his officers to this butchery any longer, and set to work to teach the Mandarins how to approach the wall by trenches.

They took to the work, and did it well. Meanwhile Li-Hung-Chang put up proclamations in characters large enough to be read from the walls. In these he offered pardon to all who would leave the city, Hu-Wang excepted. This step proved most successful; deserters came in shoals, in spite of Hu-Wang's efforts to keep them in. The truth is, that Hu-Wang and his following were hateful to the vast mass of the garrison; they were Cantonese of the worst type, while the others were peasants who had been captured and pressed into the service. It is not surprising then that, finding the opportunity of escape, they went over to the Imperialist camp at the rate of 300 a day.

Very soon the chiefs of one party in the garrison sent Gordon a very treasonable letter. They requested him to send his troops to the breach and make a false attack or two; and they promised thereupon to give him up the place. The letter shows that Gordon had already been in communication with them; for it tells how they made their signal with strips of white cloth, and lighted a fire in the city, while they threw fire-balls and rockets from the wall, without seeing anything of him, or of the 'floating-bridge,' up to the time of the fourth watch. They add that their signals were discovered and reported to Hu-Wang, and that they had only narrowly escaped being beheaded; that they still looked to him to carry out the scheme, and

that they proposed to distinguish themselves by wearing white bands, or by going with the left arms out of their sleeves. 'Should you intend coming to-night,' they go on to say, 'hang up two lamps at the East Gate as a signal; then send troops to the North and West Gates to make false attacks, whilst another body lie in ambush near the South Gate; also open fire on the new city. The rebels will rush to defend the North and West Gates, and, on our throwing two fire-balls, you should instantly scale the walls. Our party are on guard during the fifth watch, and will assist you, our cry being "Death to the rebels!" Should you not come, hoist one lamp to the East Gate. No future time for your attack need be fixed, as we can be guided by your signals. We are talked about as traitors, and should anything be proved against us, 2,000 of us would lose our lives. Our movements will be regulated by what is going on outside the city; and after the place falls we shall collect at the East Gate and await your Excellency. You must have no misgivings as to our sincerity. May heaven and earth conspire against us if we be found liars! Pray keep our communications quiet, lest anyone coming into the city betray us.'

Nothing seems to have come of this correspondence. On the anniversary of the city's capture by the Faithful King, Governor Li proposed to celebrate it by a new

assault, in which the Imperialists should take the leading part. The artillery brought down great masses of wall; the Imperialist generals crossed the ditches and crowded the ramparts, where they met with a desperate resistance. The columns began to give way. The moment was critical in the extreme, when Gordon led on a storming-party, supported by his 1st Regiment and 200 volunteers, crossed the bridges and mounted the breach. The Imperialists rallied; the Tai-pings were swept away at the point of the bayonet, and the besiegers swarmed into the city. Four of the Wangs were taken prisoners and beheaded. The rout was complete. Hu-Wang came up in haste with a large body of troops, but he was driven back. He fought to the last, however. When he was taken prisoner in his palace it took ten men to bind him. He was brought before Li-Hung-Chang, but he refused him submission. 'Were it not,' he said, 'for aid of Gordon and his men, he defied all the Futai hosts to take the city from him.' He and all the Cantonese among the prisoners were executed; the rest were spared.

The garrison was 20,000 strong. The slaughter was proportionately great.

Even before this crowning mercy Gordon was considering the necessity of disbanding his little army. The following note, written to his mother on

May 10, the day before the last assault, shows what his views were at this time:

'I shall of course make myself quite sure that the rebels are quashed before I break up the Force, as otherwise I should incur great responsibility, but on these subjects I act for myself and judge for myself; this I have found to be the best way of getting on. I shall not leave things in a mess, I hope, but I think if I am spared I shall be home by Christmas. The losses I have sustained in this campaign have been no joke: out of 100 officers I have had 48 killed and wounded, and out of 3,500 men nearly 1,000 killed and wounded; but I have the satisfaction of knowing that as far as mortal can see, six months will see the end of this rebellion, while if I had continued inactive it might have lingered on for six years. Do not think I am ill-tempered, but I do not care one jot about my promotion or what people may say. I know I shall leave China as poor as I entered it, but with the knowledge that through my weak instrumentality upwards of eighty to one hundred thousand lives have been spared. I want no further satisfaction than this. The rebels of Chan-chu-fu are the 'originals' of the rebellion, and though there may be some innocent, still the mass of them are deserving the fate that awaits them. If you could see the horrible cruelties they have everywhere perpetrated, you would say with me that it is impossible to intercede.

'They are the runaways of Soochow, Quinsan, Taitsan, Woosieh, Yesing, and many other towns; they cut off the heads of the unfortunate country people inside at the rate of 30 to 40 per diem for attempting to run away.'

The following was scratched off in pencil on a small strip of paper two hours after the fall of Chanchu-fu:

11*th May*, 1864, 4 p.m.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

'Chanchu-fu was carried by assault by the Quinsan force and Imperialists at 2 p.m. this day, with little loss. I go back to Quinsan on May 13, and shall not again take the field. The rebels are now done; they have only Tayan and Nankin, and the former will fall probably in a day or two, and Nankin in about two months. I am happy to say I got off safe.

'Your affectionate son,

'C. G. GORDON.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE END OF THE REBELLION.

On his return to Quinsan Gordon received information that the Order in Council which permitted British officers to take service under the Chinese Government was withdrawn. This would have been a serious blow to China, but for the extraordinary rapidity of his recent movements, which left the rebellion so shattered that it fell to pieces almost of its own accord. Several strongholds surrendered as a mere consequence of the leaguer of Chanchu-fu. But Nanking, though it had been long invested, and was gradually being starved, held out in a surprising manner. This made Gordon extremely anxious: the permanent success of his work was dear to him; and to see the smouldering embers of the rebellion again bursting into flame would have been matter for a lifelong sorrow.

So, after taking the necessary steps to disband his immortal army, he visited Tseng Kwo-fan, at Nanking, and had a most important interview with him re-

garding the best method of completing the success of the Imperial arms. On his way thither up the Yang-tse he visited Kwo-tsun, the Governor of the Province of Chekiang, who commanded all the troops round the rebel capital, and resided on one of the hills behind the Porcelain Tower. He inspected the siege-works, and was greatly impressed by the perseverance of the Imperialists. From the summit of the hill above the Porcelain Tower he viewed Nanking and all its palaces. Within the walls were large empty spaces, and for miles the ramparts were completely deserted; not a flag was flying, while a death-like stillness hung about the city. The wall was 40 feet high and 30 feet thick. Some Tai-pings were being lowered from it by a rope, to gather lentils outside. They were not molested by the Imperialists, though their stockades were within 80 or a 100 yards of the spot. The Imperial lines stretched for miles, with a double line of breastworks and 140 mud forts standing 600 yards apart, each containing 500 men. No one appeared to be on the look-out, and a free-and-easy style pervaded the whole force. This is what Gordon wrote on his way to Tseng-kwo-fan:

'Off Nankin, 19*th June*, 1864.

'I came up here to see Tseng-kwo-fan, and also to see what chance the Imperialists had of taking Nankin.

I arrived on the 16th June and went up to see Tsen-kwo-jen (Tseng-kwo-fan's brother who commands here) the next day. He was uncommonly civil, but I found that both he and his Mandarins preferred fighting on in their own way to any change; they did not see the advantage of big guns, and thought they could take the place by themselves. I went round the works and found the Imperialist lines extend some twelve miles, closing in the place most effectually, but still not proof against a determined attack on the part of the rebels. I also visited the galleries which they are driving under the walls, some fourteen in number. They exploded one charge two months ago, but although they got in they were driven out again. Nankin is a large place, but seemingly deserted, no men being seen on the walls or in the city, which you can see into from the hills around. It would be easy to capture, but I doubt if the Imperialists will manage it for some time, although they are going to try in about fourteen days. They are badly armed, while the rebels have plenty of muskets, etc. The Chinese are a wonderful people: they seem so apathetic about any changes that I am much afraid for them. The only man I have seen worth anything is the Futai of Kiang-soo, Li, who is stigmatised by Osborn as unprincipled, etc., etc. That the execution of the Wangs at Soochow was a breach of faith there is no doubt; but there were many reasons to exculpate the Futai for his action, which is not at all a bad act in the eyes of the Chinese. In my opinion (and I have not seen Tseng-kwo-fan yet), Li-Hung-Chang is the best man in the Empire; has correct ideas of his position, and, for a Chinaman, has most liberal tendencies. To support him—and he has a most difficult card to play with the other Mandarins—I should say would be the best policy of our Government.

'The Imperial troops are fine men, but, as I said, most inefficiently armed.

'Burgevine has again joined the rebels; he will do no harm inside Nankin, if he gets there, and is far safer with the rebels than when concocting conspiracy at Shanghai and seizing steamers.

'I go up to-night to see Tseng-kwo-fan, and to speak to him about the absolute necessity of attending to the reorganization of the Imperial forces. Lord de Grey may rest assured that our Government's policy has been the best that could have been followed.'

During his stay with Tseng-kwo-fan, Gordon discussed with him such military matters as affected China, and gave him his reasons for dissolving the Ever-Victorious Army. Composed as it was, he considered that it would prove a danger rather than an aid. He pointed out the importance of strengthening the Imperial force, of adopting the system of regular payments, and of instructing the natives in the use of foreign arms. He told the Chinese general that 10,000 men so trained would suffice, and that men and officers should be carefully chosen *ad hoc* for the purpose. Tseng-kwo-fan listened attentively, and accepted a memorandum of these and other matters of moment. Besides advising, Gordon lent the generals a helping hand, and assisted them considerably in their siege operations. He had seen enough to satisfy himself that Nanking must shortly fall, and taking

into detailed consideration the condition of the few remaining cities which still held out, he felt that the Rebellion was dead.

Some of the opinions he had formed of the Chinese were expressed at this very time in a letter dated Nanking, 19th June, '64. They serve to show the course he had pursued in his relations with them:

'What I think is this, that if we try to drive the Chinese into sudden reforms, they will strike and resist with the greatest obstinacy, and will relapse back again into old habits when the pressure is removed; but if we lead them, we shall find them willing to a degree, and more easy to manage. They like to have an option, and hate having a course struck out for them as if they were of no account in the matter. They also like to see the utility of the course proposed, and to have the reasons for the same explained over and over again, and they are also quick in seeing advantages and disadvantages.

'What we have tried to do is to force them into a certain course, making them pay for the same, and thinking it not worth while discussing the matter with them at all. I have got on by proposing to them a course of action in such a way as to give them a certain option as to whether they will follow it or not, and have always endeavoured to recommend nothing which would clash utterly with their prejudices; by this means I have led them on to change many things, which I should never have succeeded in doing if I had tried to force them to do all at once. I can say that few men have so much faith put in them by the Chinese as myself. I always consider the great difficulty the

Mandarins have to contend with: they may perfectly agree in everything that may be urged on them by us, but cannot carry it out; and we must confess that it is far easier to say 'go and do this or that' *than to do it.* We row the poor devils if they do not make reforms in their army, but do not consider that changes must be gradual, and palatable as far as possible. My idea is, that the change should be made in their army gradually, and on a small scale at first, and through the Futais, not through the Pekin Government, who are a very helpless lot. There are 60,000 troops here, and 40 Futais, or Generals of Division. What a task it would be for Tseng to try and suddenly change the organization of this force—with our organization, 40 independent commanders would be impossible. But how is Tseng to get rid of them, with their troops some six months in arrears of pay? I would say much more for the Imperialists: they have many faults, but have suffered much wrong from foreigners, who have preyed on their country. The utter waste of money through Lay's fleet is quite painful to think of.'

He had dissolved the Ever-Victorious Army on his own responsibility, though at the suggestion of Li, who saw that so costly a machine was no longer needed. Li, however, found great difficulty in meeting its demands. Our ambassador was averse to its dissolution, and the foreign merchants at Shanghai were panic-stricken by Gordon's determination. But he was right in his resolve. The army might have been reorganized under its foreign officers; it might, following on the traditions of Burgevine, have formed a party of con-

quest on its own account. It might have gone over to the enemy and revived the Rebellion. 'I can say now,' writes Gordon, 'that a more turbulent set of men (?) who formed the officers have not often been collected together, or a more dangerous lot, if they had been headed by one of their own style.' He stipulated for rewards to his officers and men proportionate to their services they had rendered: the former to receive large sums—in fact, little fortunes—the men to have such amounts as would provide for them and take them to their homes. His terms were readily granted, the more so probably as he himself refused all pecuniary rewards, though Li had been again commissioned by the Imperial Government to vote him a large sum of money. This he refused, as on a previous occasion he had declined the smaller reward of 10,000 taels. He had spent his pay of £1,200 a year in comforts for his army and in the relief of the victims of the Heavenly King. To these ends he had even taxed his own private means. It was not likely, then, that he should now do anything to give a mercenary stamp to his services, or deprive him of the reflection that he had acted in the cause of humanity alone. It might have been better, perhaps, if our Government at home had permitted him to be present when the last gun was fired over the dead Rebellion. But they were time-servers; the shriek of

the sentimentalists still reached their ears, stories of cruelties committed by the Ever-Victorious Army were still afoot; the missionary cliques were still damning and denouncing; and a policy of good sense had to give way to one of expediency. Happily, though bigotry and ignorance had done their worst, the end had been achieved.

When Gordon went to take leave of Li, he was received with the highest distinction. The Futai had learned to recognise the greatness of his character. He had met with no man of that stamp in his own country, and his intercourse with foreigners had shown him that their ruling principle was the desire of gain. He had a new experience of human nature, and from then till now his admiration and love of Gordon have undergone no change.

Other acknowledgments of his services awaited the Captain of the Ever-Victorious Army — from the Imperial Government itself, from the merchants resident in China, and from the Press both in that country and in this. On the 12th of July, 1864, our Ambassador, Sir Frederick Bruce, wrote as follows to Earl Russell:

'I enclose translation of a despatch from Prince Kung, containing the decree published by the Emperor, acknowledging the services of Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, Royal Engineers, and requesting that her

Majesty's Government be pleased to recognise them. This step has been spontaneously taken.

'Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon well deserves her Majesty's favour, for, independently of the skill and courage he has shown, his disinterestedness has elevated our national character in the eyes of the Chinese. Not only has he refused any pecuniary reward, but he has spent more than his pay in contributing to the comfort of the officers who served under him, and in assuaging the distress of the starving population whom he relieved from the yoke of their oppressors. Indeed, the feeling that impelled him to resume operations after the fall of Soochow was one of the purest humanity. He sought to save the people of the districts that had been recovered from a repetition of the misery entailed upon them by this cruel civil war.'

The Prince's communication runs thus:—

'Some time has elapsed since his Excellency, the British Minister, profoundly animated by the feeling of friendliness towards China entertained by the British Government, did, in view of the fact that rebellion was still rife in Kiangsoo, authorize Gordon and other officers of the British army to co-operate, heart and hand, with the forces of the Chinese Government against the rebels.

'On the 11th of the 5th moon of the 3rd year of Tung-che (14th June, 1864), Li, the Governor of Kiangsoo, in a memorial reporting a series of distinguished services rendered in action by Gordon, now a Tsung-Ping, with the title of Ti-Tu, together with the particulars of his conduct and discipline of the Ever-Victorious Army, requested his Majesty the Emperor to be pleased to commend him; and on the same day the

Grand Secretariat had the honour to receive the following decree:—

'"On the occasion of the recovery of Chanchu, we issued a decree conferring on Gordon, Provisional General of Division of the Army of Kiangsoo, for his co-operation with the force he commanded, the title of Ti-Tu (Commander-in-Chief of a Provisional Army); and we further presented him with banners and decorations of honour. This was to distinguish his extraordinary merit, and Li-Hung-Chang was to address us again whenever he (Gordon) should have brought the Ever-Victorious Battalions under his command into a satisfactory state of drill and discipline, and to request us to signify our approval of his conduct in laudatory terms. Li-Hung-Chang now writes to say that, both as regards their movements and its discipline, the Ever-Victorious Battalions under Gordon are in a very satisfactory state, and requests us to signify our pleasure accordingly.

'"Since the spring of last year Gordon has distinguished himself in a series of actions with the Ever-Victorious Force under his command; he has co-operated with the Forces of Government (with such effect that) Fushan has been recovered, the siege of Chanzu has been raised, and the sub-prefectural city of Taitsan, with the district cities of Quinsan and Wokong, have also been retaken, as well as the provincial capital of Soochow. This year he has retaken Yesing and Liyang; he has driven off the rebels who had worked their way to Yanshê, and he has recaptured Chanchu. He has now brought the Ever-Victorious Force to such a degree of improvement that it will prove a body of enduring utility. Not only has he shown himself throughout both brave and energetic, but his thorough appreciation of that important question, a friendly understanding

between China and foreign nations, is also deserving of the highest praise. We command that Gordon be rewarded with a yellow riding-jacket to be worn on his person, and a peacock's feather to be carried on his cap; also that there be bestowed on him four suits of the uniform proper to his rank of Ti-Tu, in token of our favour and desire to do him honour. Respect this."

'A copy of the above having been reverently made and forwarded to the Tsung-Li Yamun, the Prince and the Ministers, members of it, have to observe that General Gordon, ever since he began to co-operate with the forces of the Chinese Government against the rebels, has been alike remarkable for his courage and intelligence, and displayed extraordinary energy. But the fact that he was further able to improve the drill and discipline of the Ever-Victorious Force shows him to be in very eminent degree both able and respectable, while his success in supporting the friendly policy of the British Government, whose subject he is, entitles him to the admission that he has not shown himself unworthy of the language ever held by the British Minister regarding him.

'"In respectful obedience to the will of his Imperial Majesty, the Yamun is preparing the uniforms and other articles for transmission to him. The banners and decorations will be cared for by Li, the Governor of Kiangsoo.

'Meanwhile it becomes the duty of the Prince to address the British Minister, that his Excellency may bring these things to the notice of Her Majesty the Queen of England, in evidence of the desire of the Chinese Government, by its consideration of (Colonel Gordon's) merits, and its bestowal of rewards, to strengthen the *entente cordiale*.

'General Gordon's title, Ti-Tu, gives him the

highest rank in the Chinese army; but the Prince trusts that if, on his return home, it be possible for the British Government to bestow promotion or reward on General Gordon, the British Minister will bring the matter forward, that all may know that his achievements and his character are equally deserving of praise.'

This despatch of Prince Kung, with the Imperial Decree which it embodies, is unquestionably a high-minded and generous acknowledgment of Gordon's services and achievements. The rank of Ti-Tu is the highest ever conferred on a subject; for the banner and the Order of the Star we have parallels of our own; the Yellow Jacket and the Peacock's Feather are Chinese equivalents for the Garter and the Bath. The inference is obvious that in China they know a good man when they find one, and delight to honour him as he deserves.

The pigeon-holes of the Pekin Administration are more promptly emptied than those in Downing Street, which must have the depth of wells. Prince Kung's despatch was acted upon to the minutest particulars; Sir Frederick Bruce's is buried to this day. All that Gordon received from his own Government was one step in the army; somewhat later he was made a Companion of the Bath. Had he been a Clive, taken all the money he could get, and entered Parliament and voted straight, perhaps the Ministers would have been

kinder judges of his claims. But it was not for him to play their part; he had one of his own.

That he would have preferred to go unhonoured is certain. To him the good work done was an ample reward. Indeed, the wonder and admiration evinced at his triumphs rather pained than pleased him; his one desire was to get home and be forgotten.

'The Yellow Jacket,' he says in one of his letters, 'which has been conferred on me, is a regular Chinese distinction, with which some twenty Mandarins have been decorated; it constitutes the recipient one of the Emperor's body-guard. I will send you a short history of its institution, etc., as soon as I can. I do not care twopence about these things, but know that you and my father like them. I will try and get Sir F. Bruce to bring home Chung-Wang's sword, which is wrapped up in a rebel flag belonging to a Tien-Wang, who was killed on it at Chunchu-fu. You will see marks of his blood on the flag. Chung-Wang's sword was given by him to Lye-Wang (the rebel chief of Liyang), at Wasieh in December, '63, after the fall of Soochow, and at the time that Chung-Wang, disgusted, determined to return on Nankin, and take for the time no further operation. It is more than an ordinary sword. The Emperor of China gave one to Tseng-kwo-fan, and this gift was accompanied with permission to Tseng-kwo-fan to execute anyone, whatever his rank might be, without reference to Pekin; in fact, it was the symbol of the power of Dictator.

'I have sent my journal (of 1863) home to H——. I do not want the same published, as I think if my proceedings sink into oblivion it would be better for every

one, and my reason for this is that it is a very contested point whether we ought to have interfered or not, on which point I am perfectly satisfied that it was the proper and humane course to pursue; but I still do not expect people who do not know much about it to concur in the same. It is absurd to talk about Manchoos and Chinese; the former are extinct, and the latter are in every part. And it is equally absurd to talk of the Mandarins as a class distinct from the people of the country; they are not so, but are merely the officials who hold offices which are obtainable by every Chinese, without respect to birth, I will not say money, as certainly there is some amount of corruption in the sale of offices; but Russia is equally corrupt for that matter in her distant provinces, and it is not so very long ago that we were also somewhat tainted in the same way.'

As bearing on the conduct of our Government, however, it is worth while that a letter from 'A Student of History,' of a later date, addressed to and printed in the *Times*, should even now be resuscitated. The following extract from it will have a deep interest for Gordon's many friends and admirers:—

'It has been already pointed out that Colonel Gordon's being an engineer, no less than his peculiarly retiring character, has kept him from the employment for which his genius seemed to indicate him, and which less exploits than his might fairly have claimed. But there is probably another reason for this apparent neglect, of which I have only become aware since writing to you last week. A gentleman, himself in the

public service and well acquainted with China, happening to identify at a guess the writer of the *Times* letter, has just communicated to me the following account of matters intimately connected with the fall of the Taipings, and our share in it, which I take the liberty of introducing in his own words to your readers' notice. He states:—

'"Being at Shanghai in the summer of 1864, I met the late Sir Frederick Bruce, our minister, on his way to England. He told me that the very day before he left Pekin he was astonished at receiving a personal visit from Prince Kung, the then Regent of China, who had some days before come to say good-bye to him. The Prince said, 'You will be astonished to see me again, but I felt I could not allow you to leave without coming to see you about Gordon. We do not know what to do. He will not receive money from us, and we have already given him every honour which it is in the power of the Emperor to bestow; but as these can be of little value in his eyes, I have brought you this letter, and ask you to give it to the Queen of England, that she may bestow on him some reward which would be more valuable in his eyes.' Sir Frederick showed me a translation of Prince Kung's letter. I only remember that it was couched in the most charming terms, and that it pleaded Gordon's services as to what he had done to 'promote the kindly intercourse between the two nations,' while fully acknowledging the immense services he had rendered to China. I went," adds my informant, "to Pekin in the autumn of that year, where Gordon had been officially invited; but his dislike of being made a hero of prevented his going. Had he done so, he would have been received with almost royal honours."

'Now, sir, receiving as I have done this narrative

from a man of honour, who speaks earnestly and in good faith, and coupling it with the well-known fact that when Colonel Gordon presented himself at the War Office some months later, the Minister seemed hardly to have heard of his name, and to know nothing whatever of his successes, may it not be true—as a weekly contemporary of yours seems to suggest—that the letter of Prince Kung never reached its destination at all; indeed, never got beyond the pigeon-holes of the Foreign Office? At least, in the interest of historical truth, I would hope that some active-minded member of Parliament may not think it too late to draw attention to the subject, and to seek the production of the missing despatch, the absence of which possibly has excused that extraordinary neglect of a great soldier with which the War Office authorities have been charged.'

The fact is that Gordon, instead of allowing himself to be made the hero of official fêtes at Pekin, was carrying out a new plan for the good of the country he had saved. The cry of surprise and alarm raised by the traders of Shanghai on the disbandment of the Ever-Victorious Army had by no means been lost on him. He had conceived the idea of organizing a disciplined Chinese contingent with an English officer in command. The scheme had for its object the instruction of native troops in foreign drill, that the city, in the event of a new outbreak, might possess a more trustworthy force than a Mandarin army for its protection. The advantages of the idea were at once

perceived by Li-Hung-Chang, and several officers were selected from the 67th Regiment as drill instructors. But it was agreed that in the event of the corps taking the field, all these, with Gordon at their head, should be at once withdrawn. Judging from the letters which the Ever-Victorious General wrote home at this time, the enjoyment he got out of teaching his Chinese recruits the various manœuvres and exercises was not small. 'I am getting on very well instructing the Chinese officers in artillery, etc., in Chinese,' he says, 'and they make great progress, knowing the manual, platoon, and gun drill already, and I hope will know the simple manœuvres of battalion drill shortly. It is much easier than I supposed it would be.'

Nankin was by this time reduced and captured, so that the Rebellion had received its death-blow before Gordon left China. He had, indeed, done more than preside at the Councils of the Imperialists; he had advanced to far within the city wall. The rebels fought to the last, and defended themselves desperately, even when in the Palace of the Heavenly King. The arch-impostor himself had been urged to escape and resign the city when, its investment being complete over an area of thirty miles, and its inhabitants in a state of starvation, it could no longer be defended. But the man had a certain respect for the character he had assumed. He wished to be remembered by pos-

terity as inspired of Heaven—as the Heavenly King. He scouted the suggestion that one so great as himself should fly: he had received, he said, the command of God and Jesus to come down upon earth and rule it. 'I am the sole Lord of ten thousand nations,' he cried; 'what should I fear?' He told how he held the empire, the hills, and the streams with an iron grasp. Whether all this was mere cynicism, or the outcome of a diseased brain, is of little moment. Certain it is that he had ceased to take any account of public affairs. His subordinates might act as they pleased, except in one respect: he demanded the implicit observance of etiquette, in addressing him in theological phrase and in professing absolute submission to his decrees. He had been guilty of cruelties greater than are accredited to any other human being: flaying alive and pounding to death were his ordinary modes of punishment. When he knew the end was come, he hanged all his wives; then, like Mokanna, he committed suicide. Thus was destroyed the horrible hope that some other fanatic might adopt and preach his hideous creed; if there is anything that will wipe out the belief that a man is inspired by God, it is the self-slaughter of the prophet. Few atrocities were committed by the Imperialists on the surrender of the city; this was attributed to Gordon's influence over the Mandarins. The great soldier, Chung-Wang, or the Faithful King, the right arm of

the Rebellion, who was taken prisoner with other rebel warriors, was however decapitated.

'I know,' says Gordon, 'you will be glad to hear of the fall of Nankin, which virtually ends the rebellion. I expect the rebels will soon run, and then disperse over the country. The city is in a very ruinous state, and looks the picture of desolation. I was only there two days, and those days were very hot. It is a grand thing the fall of Nankin, and will do a deal of good in every way. Having lost their chief, the rebels will soon disperse and break up,

'As long as it held out, my officers were ready to join the rebels if there was a chance of success; now they will see the futility of such a course, and disperse over the globe. It is the greatest blessing for the Mandarins, who did not see their danger from these men who do not want for talent.

'I never want anything published. I am sure it does no good, and makes people chary of writing.'

Having completed his work and taken public leave of all with whom he had been associated in his duties, Gordon was now at liberty to return home. But before quitting China, the press had begun to shower on him such eulogies as are seldom the portion of the very greatest. An engrossed and illuminated address from the merchants of Shanghai was presented to him; and this, as the expression of large and important firms of business-men who are for the most part excellent judges of whatever affects a national interest, may be taken as a sober estimate of the good he had done. It

is signed by nearly sixty firms, including the great banks; and as most of the signatories were only a year before opposed to the policy of British interference with the rebellion, it is too significant to be omitted. Thus it runs:

'On the eve of your departure for your native country, we, the undersigned, mostly fellow-countrymen of your own, but also representing various other nationalities, desire to express to you our earnest wish for a successful voyage and happy return to your friends and the land of your birth.

'Your career during the last two years of your residence in the East has been, so far as we know, without a parallel in the history of the intercourse of foreign nations with China; and, without entering at all upon the political bearings of the great question with which your name must ever remain so intimately connected, we feel that we should be alike wanting towards you and towards ourselves were we to pass by this opportunity without expressing our appreciation and admiration of the line of conduct which you personally have pursued.

'In a position of unequalled difficulty, and surrounded by complications of every possible nature, you have succeeded in offering to the eyes of the Chinese nation, no less by your loyal and, throughout, disinterested line of action, than by your conspicuous gallantry and talent for organization and command, the example of a foreign officer serving the Government of this country with honourable fidelity and undeviating self-respect.

'It is by such examples that we may trust to see many of the prejudices which warp the Chinese mind, as regards foreigners, removed, and from such expe-

rience that we may look forward with hope to the day when, not only in the art of war, but in the more peaceful occupations of commerce and civilization, the Chinese Government may see fit to level the barriers hitherto existing, and to identify itself more and more with that progressive course of action which, though springing from the West, must prove ultimately of equal benefit to the countries of the East.

'Once more wishing you a prosperous voyage and a long career of usefulness and success. . . .'

This was Gordon's answer:

'Shanghai, November 25th, 1864.

'GENTLEMEN,

'I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your handsome letter of this day's date, and to express to you the great satisfaction which I feel at the honourable mention you have made therein of my services in China.

'It will always be a matter of gratification to me to have received your approval, and, deeply impressed with the honour you have paid me,

'I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

'Yours obediently,

'C. G. GORDON.'

Other expressions of admiration and gratitude poured in. The press at home and abroad were loud in Gordon's praise; and when he left Shanghai for England, it was universally felt that China was parting with her greatest hero and her best friend. The following lines, written by one who well knew how deeply the Empire

was indebted to him, may be taken as fairly representative of the universal feeling:

'Can China tell how much she is indebted to Colonel Gordon? Would twenty million taels repay the actual service he has rendered to the Empire?

'While ordinary Chinese commanders were sitting down before a city, Gordon was walking round it, regardless of shots from the walls. He never permitted an hour to elapse before putting his ideas into practice, and this very rapidity quite appalled his too confident adversaries. They, accustomed to conquest, and to constant superiority, began to get confused by the coolness with which they were handled, even in the most difficult circumstances, until it came to pass that the name of Gordon paralyzed their hearts, and became equivalent to the word "surrender." Whether this be the case or no, recent facts have since proved that the Colonel's operations have completely broken the back of the rebellion. Chinese commanders, with all their conceit, have given ample testimony to the skill and prowess of the ever-gallant Colonel. Gordon's name alone has a weight in the province of Kiang-su which is not at all approached by any Chinaman lower than Tseng-Kwo-Fan himself.

'It seems like a dream to us to think that the traders in Shanghai were trembling only the other day for the safety of their lives and property, and that now they are as free from fear as if they were sitting in a Lombard Street counting-house. Again we say that the rebellion is finished; and we do not suppose that there breathes the man who regrets it. Even to scenes of slaughter we have become callous, knowing that out of the misery will rise joy, out of chaos order, and out of depression prosperity.'

Even the rebels, to whom his name was a terror, admired and loved him. A letter written by a Tai-ping chief, after the massacres of Quinsan and Soochow, shows what a splendid estimate they took of their most formidable foe:

'Far be it from me to assert that Gordon was privy to the massacres committed. Well as we are accustomed to the ruffianly conduct of many of the low scoundrels who disgrace the name of Englishman, and whom we know to be capable of any atrocity, we do not imagine that the great leader of the army would ever consent to the perpetration of murders so horrible. Yet never did the plains of China blush with blood more unrighteously spilled than on the day succeeding the capture of Quinsan, when the disorganized Hua contingent satiated itself with outrage. No, not even in the ancient days, when the men of Han fought valiantly with Mongol and Manchu, not even in the sanguinary but glorious days of Chu, did undisciplined and semi-barbarous troops equal the atrocities of the English drilled army. I have heard that Gordon grieved bitterly over the cruelties which he could not prevent, and that his heart burned when he thought that in your happy and prosperous country beyond the Western Ocean, these horrors would be ascribed to him. It may gratify him to think that even amongst those who would willingly be his friends, but are forced to be his enemies, he does not receive the blame of the events he could not control. I have spent so much room already in speaking of Gordon that I may as well say a few words more. Would to Heaven that some unworthy adventurer would take command, some one that could be slain without regret, and, if necessary, slaughtered without mercy! *Often*

have I seen the deadly musket struck from the hand of a dastardly Englishman (tempted by love of loot to join our ranks) when he attempted from his place of safety to kill Gordon, who ever rashly exposed himself. This has been the act of a chief—yea, of the Shield King himself. How then can we be accused of blind hatred even to our enemies?'

CHAPTER IX.

'GOD BLESS THE KERNEL.'

THAT Gordon was gratified by the appreciation of those who had watched his career in China there can be no doubt; but to be praised, courted, and called a hero for doing his duty was more than he cared to approve. The few lines announcing his intention of coming home show that his one idea on arriving in England was to enjoy the quiet of his own family circle. 'The individual is coming home,' he writes to his mother on the 17th November, 1864, 'but does not wish it known, for it would be a signal for the disbanded to come to Southampton; and although the waits at Christmas are bad, these others are worse.' No sooner, however, had he set foot in this country, than invitations came in upon him from all quarters, and to have him for a guest was the season's ideal: friends and kinsmen were made the bearers of superb invitations, all of which he had the courage to decline. In truth, he was in no humour for personal congratulations from the great.

He had gracefully received the acknowledgment of those whom he had served; he had read with pleasure the appreciations of the public press; but when he saw a tendency to pronounce him a hero, he ceased from reading and listening. He even implored a fellow-officer who had written a narrative of the campaign, to let the subject drop.

In his home letters he had earnestly requested that his part in putting down the rebellion should not be made public; he had said, indeed, that the sooner it was forgotten the better. On his return, then, none, save his relatives, heard anything more of the campaign. By the fireside at Southampton, once more he told the strange and splendid romance of those fifteen months—a story teeming with the noblest and most lofty incidents of war, with singular encounters, disastrous chances, and moving accidents by flood and field. To listen to it was a new and unique experience; and as Gordon stood every evening for three or four hours descanting on the things he had seen, now pointing to the map before him to explain a position, now raising his voice in sudden anger at defeat, or dropping it with victory in mercy for the fallen, the company was spell-bound and amazed. The wonderful scenes he described, and the simple enthusiasm with which he described them, left the impression of a new 'Arabian Night.' Never was the unrecorded better worth re-

cording. But though nothing of it was written down, its effect on those who listened still remains—unforgettable and unforgot.

Had Gordon been touched with the ambition incident to successful men, he would have seized the opportunities so abundantly afforded him of mingling with the dignitaries of the world, whose invitations and courtesies were many. Had he accepted them, there can be little doubt that he would have been made to 'shine in use' till England had cause to bless him for one of the greatest of her sons; but to push and to intrigue was impossible. The consequence was that he soon dropped out of the recollection of those in whose power it was to promote his professional and worldly interests. For his own part, he had no desire to enjoy advantages above the lot of his brother officers; he was content to rejoin his corps, and to resume his duty as a Royal Engineer.

Many circumstances tend to show that, as part of his mental constitution, he had a temper, well under control, but on occasion hasty and impatient. His anger never found such vent as against those who praised him. His mother used to show her friends a beautifully executed map, torn through the middle and pasted together again; it was a relic of Woolwich Academy. One day she was exhibiting it, when her son suddenly entered the room, saw the admiration of

the lookers-on, and at once took the map from her, tore it in half, and flung it on the back of the fire. The journal of the Tai-ping War, illustrated by his own hand, met, it is to be feared, with a worse fate still. He had sent it home from China, not wishing it (as has been seen by one of his letters) to be seen outside his family. A Minister interested in the Rebellion heard of the manuscript, borrowed it, and was so struck by its contents that he sent it to the press, in order that his colleagues might have the benefit of reading it. Late one evening it so happened that Gordon inquired about his journal. He was told what had occurred. He rose from table, left the house, and posted off to the Minister's residence. Not finding him at home, he went to the printer's, demanded his manuscript, and gave orders that what copies had been printed should be destroyed, and the type broken up. What eventually befell the manuscript is unknown; but it is certain that no one has since seen it; in fact there is every probability of its having been destroyed.

In 1865 he received the appointment of Commanding Royal Engineer at Gravesend, where he remained until 1871. These six years, different from any other period of his career, were perhaps the happiest in his life. Among his earliest tasks, in addition to the fulfilment of his official duties—the construction of the Thames Defences—was the distribution of the various

medals and rewards to such of his old comrades of the Ever-Victorious Army, as had in any way distinguished themselves. This was done for the most part by correspondence, his followers being scattered over all parts of the world. He received a great number of acknowledgments. There is not one of these but shows how reverently he was beloved by all who had served with him.

To the world his life at Gravesend was a life of self-suppression and self-denial; to himself it was one of happiness and pure peace. He lived wholly for others. His house was school, and hospital, and almshouse in turn—was more like the abode of a missionary than of a Colonel of Engineers. The troubles of all interested him alike. The poor, the sick, the unfortunate, were ever welcome, and never did suppliant knock vainly at his door. He always took a great delight in children, but especially in boys employed on the river or the sea. Many he rescued from the gutter, cleansed them and clothed them, and kept them for weeks in his home. For their benefit he established evening classes, over which he himself presided, reading to and teaching the lads with as much ardour as if he were leading them to victory. He called them his 'kings,' and for many of them he got berths on board ship. One day a friend asked him why there were so many pins stuck into the map of the world over his

mantelpiece; he was told that they marked and followed the course of the boys on their voyages—that they were moved from point to point as his youngsters advanced, and that he prayed for them as they went, day by day. The light in which he was held by these lads was shown by inscriptions in chalk on the fences. A favourite legend was, 'God bless the Kernel.' So full did his classes at length become that the house would no longer hold them, and they had to be given up. Then it was that he attended and taught at the Ragged Schools, and it was a pleasant thing to watch the attention with which his wild scholars listened to his words.

'His benevolence embraced all,' writes one who saw much of him at this time. 'Misery was quite sufficient claim for him, without going into the question of merit; and of course sometimes he was deceived. But very seldom, for he had an eye that saw through and through people; it seemed useless to try to hide anything from him. I have often wondered how much this wonderful power was due to natural astuteness, or how much to his own clear singleness of mind and freedom from self, that the truth about everything seemed revealed to him. The workhouse and the infirmary were his constant haunts, and of pensioners he had a countless number all over the neighbourhood. Many of the dying sent for him in preference to the clergy, and ever ready was he to visit them, no matter in what weather or at what distance. But he would never take the chair at a religious meeting, or be in any way prominent He was always willing to

conduct services for the poor and address a sweeps' tea-meeting; but all public speechifying, especially where complimentary speeches were made in his honour, he *loathed*. All eating and drinking he was indifferent to. Coming home with us one afternoon late, we found his tea waiting for him—a most unappetizing stale loaf and a teapot of tea. I remarked upon the dryness of the bread, when he took the whole loaf (a small one), crammed it into the slop-basin, and poured all the tea upon it, saying it would soon be ready for him to eat, and in half an hour it would not matter what he had eaten. He always had dry, humorous little speeches at command that flavoured all his talk, and I remember the merry twinkle with which he told us that many of the boys, thinking that being invited to live with the Colonel meant delicate fare and luxury, were unpleasantly enlightened upon that point when they found he sat down with them to salt beef and just the necessary food. He kindly gave us a key to his garden, thinking our children might like to walk there sometimes. The first time my husband and I visited it, we remarked what nice peas and vegetables of all kinds there were, and the housekeeper coming out, we made some such remark to her. She at once told us that the Colonel never tasted them—that nearly all the garden, a large one, was cultivated by different poor people to whom he gave permission to plant what they chose, and to take the proceeds. She added that it often happened that presents of fine fruit and flowers would be sent to the Colonel, and that he would never so much as taste them, but take them or send them at once to the hospital or workhouse for the sick. He always thanked the donors, but never told them how their gifts had been appropriated. We used to say he had no *self*, in that following his Divine

Master. He would never talk of himself and his doings. Therefore his life never can and never will be written. It was in these years that the first book about him came out. He allowed the author to come and stay at Fort House, and gave him every facility towards bringing out his book—all the particulars about the Tai-ping Rebellion, even to lending him his diary. Then, from something that was said, he discovered that personal acts of his own (bravery, possibly) were described, and he asked to see what had been written. Then he tore out page after page the parts about himself, to the poor author's chagrin, who told him he had spoiled his book. I tried to get at the bottom of this feeling of his, telling him he might be justly proud of these things; but was answered that no man has a right to be proud of anything, inasmuch as he has no *native* good in him—he has received it all; and he maintained that there was deep cause for intense humiliation on the part of everyone, that all wearing of medals, adorning the body, or any form of self-glorification, was quite out of place. Also, he said, he had no right to possess anything, having once given himself to God. What was he to keep back? He knew no limit. He said to me, "You who profess the same have no right to the gold chain you wear; it ought to be sold for the poor." But he acknowledged the difficulty of others regarding all earthly things in the light that he did: his purse was always empty from his constant liberality. He told us the silver tea-service that he kept (a present from Sir William Gordon) would be sufficient to pay for his burial without troubling his family. But though he would never speak of his own acts, he would talk freely of his thoughts, and long and intensely interesting conversations have we had with him: his mystical turn of mind lent a great charm

to his words, and we learned a great deal from him. I have often wished I had recorded at the time many of his aphorisms. We saw him very frequently, but there was a tacit understanding that we never were to invite him nor to ask him to stay longer when he rose to go. To ask him to dinner would have been a great offence. He would say, "Ask the poor and sick; don't ask me, who have enough!"'

He had a great number of medals, for which he cared nothing. There was a gold one, however, given to him by the Empress of China, with a special inscription engraved upon it, for which he had a great liking. But it suddenly disappeared; no one knew where or how. Years afterwards it was found out, by a curious accident, that Gordon had erased the inscription, and sent the medal anonymously to Canon Miller for the relief of the sufferers from the cotton famine at Manchester.

Thus he spent the next six years of his life: in slums, hospitals, and workhouse, or knee-deep in the river at work upon the Thames defence. Then in 1871 he was appointed British Commissioner to the European Commission of the Danube. In taking leave of Gravesend, he presented a number of splendid Chinese flags of all colours—the trophies of his victories—to his 'kings' at the Ragged Schools. These are still yearly exhibited on the occasion of school-treats, and the donor's name is cheered to the echo. The expressions of regret on

his departure from the town were unanimous. Here is one tribute out of many, which shows how deep was the loss and how genuine the sorrow and the sense of gratitude he left behind:

'Our readers, without exception, will learn with regret of the departure of Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, C.B., R.E., from the town, in which he has resided for six years, gaining a name by the most exquisite charity that will long be remembered. Nor will he be less missed than remembered, for in the lowly walks of life, by the bestowal of gifts; by attendance and ministrations on the sick and dying; by the kindly giving of advice; by attendance at the Ragged School, Workhouse, and Infirmary; in fact, by general and continual beneficence to the poor, he has been so unwearied in well-doing that his departure will be felt by many as a personal calamity. There are those who even now are reaping the rewards of his kindness. His charity was essentially charity, and had its root in deep philanthropic feeling and goodness of heart; shunning the light of publicity, but coming even as the rain in the night-time, that in the morning is noted not, but only the flowers bloom and give a greater fragrance. Colonel Gordon, although comparatively a young man, has seen something of service, having obtained his brevet and order of Companion of the Bath by distinguished service in China. He is thus eminently fitted for his new post, and there is no doubt but that he will prove as beneficent in his station under the Foreign Office as he was whilom at Gravesend; for it was evidently with him a natural heart-gift, and not to be eradicated. Colonel Gordon's duties at Gravesend terminated on the 30th of September, and by this time he is on his

way to Galatz in Turkey, where he will take up his residence as British Commissioner on the Danube. He is succeeded by Colonel the Hon. G. Wrottesley, as Commandant of Royal Engineers for the Gravesend district. All will wish him well in his new sphere, and we have less hesitation in penning these lines from the fact that laudatory notice will confer but little pleasure upon him who gave with the heart, and cared not for commendation.'

The 'new sphere,' Galatz, was by no means new to him, for he had worked there more than once, as we know, in early years. His labours, scarcely more interesting than those on the Thames, were devoted to the improvement of the mouth of the Danube. People wondered why so able an officer should be wasted upon work which many another would have done as well. The wonder found public utterance a year and half after his departure from England.

The question what to do with the Ashantees was uppermost in the public mind. The way in which they were planning an attack on Cape Coast Castle, after the destruction of a town and a couple of bad defeats at our hands, proved them an enemy not easy of conquest. A general feeling prevailed that a leader was wanted, and, as has often since happened in like emergencies, Chinese Gordon was the name that rose to many lips. Letters were written to the papers in which his exploits were revived, and leading

articles appeared in the *Times* and elsewhere, in which the Government was urged to employ the services of the matchless soldier, who had been told off to fritter away his genius as a Vice-Consul on the Danube.

Among the communications sent to the papers, was one of such deep interest that I make no apology for reproducing it. It is a letter addressed to the *Times*, from one signing himself 'Mandarin,' who fought with Gordon in the campaign against the Tai-pings. It throws new light on the subject. It is from the pen of one who knew the true quality of the commander under whom it had been his fortune to serve:

'It is really surprising,' says this writer, 'how scanty a knowledge English people have of the wonderful feats performed not many years since by an officer whose name has lately been rather prominently mentioned—Colonel, or Chinese Gordon. Having served under him during the most eventful period of his command of the "Ever-Victorious Army"—an epithet, you may be sure, not given by himself—I might fill many of your columns with traits of General Gordon's amazing activity and wonderful foresight, his indomitable energy and quiet unassuming modesty, his perseverance, kindness, cool courage, and even heroism. My individual opinion may not be worth much, but is it not notorious that every man who has ever served under or with General (as you must allow me to style him) Gordon is an enthusiastic believer in his military genius and capacity? There are not many commanders of whom the subordinates would speak with such unanimous praise. What is, perhaps, most striking in Gordon's career in China is

the entire devotion with which the native soldiery served him, and the implicit faith they had in the result of operations in which he was personally present. In their eyes General Gordon was literally a magician, to whom all things were possible. They believed him to bear a charmed life, and a short stick or rattan cane which he invariably carried about, and with which he always pointed in directing the fire of artillery or other operations, was firmly looked on as a wand or talisman. These things have been repeated to me again and again by my own men, and I know they were accepted all over the contingent. These notions, especially the men's idea that their General had a charmed existence, were substantially aided by Gordon's constant habit, when the troops were under fire, of appearing suddenly, usually unattended, and calmly standing in the very hottest part of the fire.

'Besides his favourite cane, he carried nothing except field-glasses—never a sword or revolver; or rather, if the latter, it was carried unostentatiously and out of sight; and nothing could exceed the contrast between General Gordon's quiet undress uniform, without sword, belts, or buckles, and apparently no weapon but a two-foot rod, and the buccaneering, brigand-like costume of the American officers, strapped, armed, and booted like theatrical banditti.

'I only know one occasion on which General Gordon drew a revolver. The contingent had been lying idle in Quinsan for three months of the summer without taking the field. This time had been employed in drilling the men, and in laying in large stores of war material preparatory to the approaching attack on Soochow. The heat all this time was fearfully oppressive; dysentery and cholera had carried off many men and officers, and drill towards the end of the term was

somewhat relaxed. This in some measure affected the discipline of the men, and, indeed, of the officers also. But the chief cause of the deteriorated discipline was, perhaps, to be found in another direction. On the march and in the field the men were unable to obtain opium, the officers but slender stores of liquor; in garrison, on the contrary, they could indulge to the full extent of their monthly pay.

'But, whatever the causes, it is certain that when, towards September, orders to prepare for an expedition against strong forts and stockades barring the way by canal from Quinsan to Soochow were issued, the discipline of the troops was greatly inferior to what it had been three months earlier. The artillery, in particular, showed decided insubordination. One company of it refused to embark in the barges which were to take it up the canal, the men declining to take the field before the approaching pay-day. The officers managed to make the men "fall in," but from the parade-ground they refused to move, although the luggage was already on board the boats, lying fifty yards off. At this juncture General Gordon, who had been apprised by messengers of the state of affairs, arrived on the spot with his interpreter. He was on foot, in undress, apparently unarmed, and, as usual, exceedingly cool, quiet, and undemonstrative.

'Directly he approached the company he ordered his interpreter to direct every man who refused to embark to step to the front. One man only advanced. General Gordon drew his revolver from an inside breast-pocket, presented it at the soldier's head, and desired the interpreter to direct the man to march straight to the barge and embark. The order was immediately complied with, and then General Gordon, giving the necessary words of command, the company followed without hesi-

tation or demur. It may be said that any other determined officer might have done likewise, and with the same results. Not so. It was generally allowed by the officers, when the event became known, that the success in this instance was solely due to the awe and respect in which General Gordon was held by the men; and that such was the spirit of the troops at the time, that had any other but he attempted what he did, the company would have broken into open mutiny, shot their officers, and committed the wildest excesses.

'In less than a week the spirit of the troops was as excellent as before, and gradually the whole garrison joined in a series of movements which culminated in the fall of Soochow.

'Considering the materials Gordon had to work with, the admirable state of discipline and military efficiency which his contingent eventually attained is really amazing. He certainly had a few first-rate officers—rough and ready ones, no doubt—perhaps half a dozen altogether, of which General Kirkham, at present in Abyssinia, is one. But as for the remainder, or the great majority of the remainder, I scarcely like to use the epithets which would be most applicable to them. This I remember; during the month of July, when the corps was in Quinsan, out of 130 or 140 officers, eleven died of *delirium tremens*. There was no picking or choosing; the General was glad to get any foreigners to fill up vacancies, and the result, especially in garrison, was deplorable. They fought well and led their men well, however, and that, after all, was the chief requisite.

'Well, notwithstanding such drawbacks, every regiment could go through the manual and platoon and bayonet exercises to English words of command with a smartness and precision to which not many Volunteer

companies can attain; could manœuvre very fairly in companies or as a battalion, and each regiment had been put through a regular course of musketry instruction, every man firing his ninety rounds at the regular distances up to 300 yards, the scores and returns being satisfactorily kept and the good shots rewarded.

'It was a most fortunate thing for General Gordon that a few years before he accepted the Chinese command he had been employed in surveying and mapping precisely that portion of the country in which his future operations were carried on. This part of China is a vast network of canals and towpaths; there are absolutely no roads, wheeled vehicles are never used, and the bridges still remaining were scarce and precarious. It was an immense advantage to know what canals were still navigable, which choked with weeds, and what bridges were left standing; where the ground would be likely to bear artillery, and where it was impassable swamp. Gordon knew every feature of the country better than any other person, native or foreigner —far better even than the rebels who had overrun it and been in partial possession for years.

'But even these advantages would go but a short way towards accounting for the complete and thorough success which marked Gordon's career where his predecessors had gained merely temporary advantages, fruitless towards securing the main object in view, the expulsion of the enemy from the province. The reasons for Gordon's great successes, for his unparalleled feat, must be sought for elsewhere; and they are, without doubt, firstly his military genius, and secondly his character and qualities, which were such as to cause all brought in contact with or serving under him to have unbounded faith in his capacity, and to feel firmly that the best means at his disposal would be used to the best purpose.

'To persons who know General Gordon, his unassuming ways and quiet retiring manners, it speaks volumes that the ignorant men and rowdy officers composing his contingent should have looked on him in the light they did, and in the manner I have attempted to describe.

'That a swaggering, ostentatious, dashing, and successful General should be looked up to by such men would be natural enough. If one were to draw inferences one might, perhaps, say the ignorant Chinamen were better judges than certain well-educated folk nearer home.'

Admirable as is the above testimony to Gordon's influence over his men, it contains a statement which is quite incorrect. Gordon knew nothing of the country he was destined to traverse, except that portion of it which represented the thirty miles radius round Shanghai, marked out by the Government as a protection against the inroads of the rebels.

But such reminiscences, backed as they were by the people and the press, failed of the desired effect. Wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it. Wiser than wisdom, Government declined to place the 'Ever-Victorious General,' as Gordon was now called by many, in any position of command.

The voice of the press and the voice of the public died away in an echo of the old strain that in this country to be an engineer is to be unfit for staff employ. When the authorities were called upon by the Khedive, however, a few months later to allow Gordon to enter the Egyptian service and settle a question of more importance to Egypt than to England, they readily gave their consent.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE LAND OF THE BLACKS.

He left Galatz towards the end of 1873. Early next year he took service with the Khedive, and succeeded Sir Samuel Baker as Governor of the Tribes in Upper Egypt. While at Constantinople in the summer of 1872, he had been asked by Nubar Pasha, whom he had greatly impressed during the sitting of the Danubian Commission, to recommend some officer of Engineers to fill the post. A year later, he tendered his own services, subject always to the approval of the British Government. No objection was raised; so he came to London, made his preparations, and started forthwith for Central Africa, calling at Cairo on his way for final instructions.

The Khedive proposed to give him £10,000 a year; but he would not hear of it. He declined to accept more than £2,000. This very unusual conduct gave rise to a great deal of comment at the time, and has since been the subject of much criticism; but to those who knew the man, and the way in which Ismail filled

PORTRAIT OF GORDON AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE SOUDAN.

his treasury, the refusal was intelligible enough. In the first place, while acting as English Commissioner at Galatz, he had been in receipt of £2,000 a year from his own Government; and it did not fall in with his theory of patriotism nor his sense of honour to accept a larger stipend from a foreign Government than he had been receiving from his own. He knew well, too, that the larger sum would in point of fact be blood-money wrung from the wretches under his rule. He decided therefore to take no more than would pay his expenses.

Egypt's advance into Central Africa since 1853 had been considerable. In that year her possessions on the Nile did not extend much farther than 100 miles south of Khartoum. Now her rule has touched the Albert and Victoria Lakes, while the conquest of Darfour has brought her western frontier within fifteen days' march of Lake Tchad, and her eastern to the lower Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The country south of Khartoum — Baker's Ismailia — was first opened up by European traders, whose main object was the acquisition of ivory. They were not long in finding out that 'black ivory' was far more profitable than white, and they soon established fortified posts, garrisoned them with armed bands, captained them with Arab bravos, and kidnapped and sold the negroes far and near. At last the traffic grew so large and

shameless, that it became the scandal of the world. There was a hue and cry, and the European traders were obliged to withdraw. This did not, however, prevent them from selling their stations to the Arabs, who paid a tax to the Egyptian Government, and so bought toleration and impunity. In less than ten years from the date of this new arrangement, the slave-trade became a government monopoly. The suffering tribes suffered tenfold. The Arab captains, being under no control as heretofore, increased their bands by pressing the boy slaves taken in their raids. They trained them up in the arts of kidnapping and plunder; and they set them to the very work of which they were the victims. In this way the hunters of men became a power, and their horrible traffic a dominant interest. At last the Government got at once afraid and ashamed of them. Their hordes were a standing menace to its peace, whilst the outcry against them was a blemish on its fame. Moreover, so successful and strong were they, and so confident withal in their strength, that they refused to pay the tax. One of them, indeed, a certain Sebehr Rahama—called the Black Pasha—set up as the equal and rival of the Khedive himself. He was lord of over thirty stations; and Dr. Schweinfurth found him surrounded by a court, and living in little less than princely state.

Sebehr, indeed, was not a man to be trifled with.

An officer named Bellal was sent out to humble his pride, and put him in his proper place; but he met Bellal in battle, and routed him with great slaughter. The Khedive seems at first to have been exasperated by his defeat, but he was afterwards compelled to submit to it; for Sebehr grew stronger year by year, and was soon confirmed in his position as the king of the slave-dealers in Equatorial Africa. Then the Khedive grew thoroughly afraid of him. He made the scoundrel a Bey, and in his invasion of Darfour he accepted him as an ally. Sebehr marched on the enemy from the south, while Ismail Pasha Yacoob, who represented the Khedive, supported the slave-dealer from the north. The Sultan of Darfour and his two sons were slain; the country was subdued; and Sebehr was made a Pasha. But this was not enough for him; he wanted to be Governor-General. The Khedive, who had encouraged slave-dealing while it served to increase his revenue, was converted to active and sonorous philanthropy the moment he saw his own supremacy at stake. He began to regard the traffic with a holy horror, and he gave out to the admiring world of Europe that he was determined to suppress and stamp it out. To this end (he said) he engaged the services of Sir Samuel Baker; to this end he called to his aid the genius of Gordon. The lesson must be made clear—to use his own words—even in those remote parts, that

a mere difference of colour does not make men a commodity, and that life and liberty are sacred things. Under this mask of philanthropy, Gordon, who was known for one of the most philanthropic of men as well as one of the most daring and brilliant of commanders, was chosen by him as his new Governor. Under this mask of philanthropy he formed Upper Egypt into a separate Government, and claimed as a monopoly of the State the whole of its trade with the outside world.

Gordon grew restless during his few days' sojourn at Cairo. The fact is that before he had been many hours in the place he had, with his rapid perception, gone to the heart of the whole scheme. Almost his first words on writing home from Egypt were these: 'I think I can see the true motive of the expedition, and believe it to be a sham to catch the attention of the English people.' Nevertheless, he was determined to go through with his undertaking, and do his utmost to relieve the sufferings of the miserable tribes. We shall see him in the course of this narrative surrounded by a thousand difficulties and dangers, over which he triumphed with a force of will, an energy, and a genius of enterprise and resource almost unmatched. The spirit in which he pursued his perilous task may be gathered from his own words, uttered at a later period: 'I will do it, for I value my

life as naught, and should only leave much weariness for perfect peace.'

It had been Gordon's wish to proceed by ordinary steamer down the Red Sea to Suakim, but Nubar Pasha, who in many ways had tried his patience, declared that the Governor of Upper Egypt must go in state. So a number of servants were engaged, and leaving his staff to follow, the new Governor, with an equerry of the Viceroy, departed on his way. A special train was in readiness to take him to Suez, but the engine broke down, and he had to continue the journey by ordinary train. This delighted him greatly: 'They had begun in glory,' he said, 'and ended in shame.' He reached Suakim on February 25. On his arrival he was put in quarantine for the night, probably because the Governor was not ready to receive him. There were some 220 troops on board, destined to serve him as an escort across the desert to Berber. It was a fortnight's march; but the length was rather welcome, as Gordon, strong in his Chinese experience, felt that it would enable his soldiers, who were the merest ragamuffins, to know him better.

His staff consisted of Romulus Gessi, an able and daring Italian, whom he had known as an interpreter in the Crimea; Mr. Kemp, engineer; the two Linants; Mr. Russell, son of Dr. W. H. Russell; Mr. Anson; Mr. Long, an American; and Abou Saoud,

an ex-slaver whom Gordon, in the teeth of all sorts of opposition, had determined on converting to honesty and usefulness. They were thus divided:—Gessi and Anson, presently to take charge of Khartoum, were sent to the Bahr Gazelle to make friends with the natives, and observe what they could of the workings of the slave-trade; Kemp and Russell were despatched to the foot of certain falls, fifteen miles north of Gondokoro, to discover how far the river was navigable towards the Albert Nyanza, and eventually to launch a steamer on the lake; Linant was deputed to make excursions among the tribes, Colonel Long to take charge of Gondokoro; while Abou Saoud, known up country as the 'Sultan,' was to help his captain to a knowledge of the enemy's movements. Gordon, I may note, had found this fellow a prisoner at Cairo. The Khedive knew not how to deal with him, when Gordon, seeing the use to which his knowledge of the country could be turned, offered to take him on his staff. The Khedive and Nubar Pasha refused to sanction the scheme. They knew that in employing one who had already shown himself to be a treacherous desperado, the Governor would be risking his life. Nevertheless, at his request, an interview was arranged; and as he still persisted in his determination, the slave-hunter was set at liberty and sent with him into the Soudan.

The party left Berber by boat on March 9th, and after three days' sail arrived at Khartoum, a place well

situated, but of flat-roofed mud houses. The Governor-General, in full uniform, came out to meet Gordon, and he landed to salutes of artillery and the strains of a brass band. He was greeted with excellent news; the 'sudd,' a grassy growth on the river, had been cleared away by the soldiers, so that the journey from Khartoum to Gondokoro, which had taken Sir Samuel Baker upwards of fourteen months, was reduced to no more than three weeks.

He remained at Khartoum eight days. During this time he busied himself, notwithstanding the excessive heat and dryness of the air, to which he was not yet habituated, in holding a review, in visiting the hospital and the schools, and in issuing this decree:

'By reason of the authority of the Governor of the Provinces of the Equatorial Lakes, with which his Highness the Khedive has invested me, and the irregularities which until now have been committed, it is henceforth decreed:

'1. That the traffic in ivory is the monopoly of the Government.

'2. No person may enter these Provinces without a "teskere" from the Governor-General of Soudan, such "teskere" being available only after it shall have received the *visa* of the competent authority at Gondokoro or elsewhere.

'3. No person may recruit or organize armed bands within those Provinces.

'4. The importation of firearms and gunpowder is prohibited.

'5. Whosoever shall disobey this decree will be punished with all the rigour of the military laws.

'GORDON.'

On the 22nd of March he sailed for Gondokoro. Great crocodiles basked on the Nilotic mud; flocks of migratory birds wheeled through the burning air. Here were storks, and pelicans, and tiny egrets; while huge riverhorses splashed and blew, and troops of monkeys, their tails 'stuck up straight over their backs like swords,' came down to drink of the sacred stream. The banks were thickly wooded with gum and tamarisk. Some of the inhabitants wore gourds for hats; others wore nothing at all, not even gourds, and fled affrighted at a pointing telescope. As the staff had not yet come up, Gordon had to look after nearly everything himself. Nevertheless his spirits were good, and his remarks on his strange surroundings are often full of humour. One moonlight night, for instance, as he was thinking of home behind and the difficulties ahead, there came a loud laughing from a large bush on the bank. 'I felt put out,' he writes; 'but the irony came only from birds, that laughed at us from the bushes for some time in a very rude way. They were a species of stork, and seemed in capital spirits, and highly amused at anybody thinking of going up to Gondokoro with the hope of doing anything.' Six days up the river he met a steamer from Gondokoro, in which, being a

faster one, he continued his journey. No one had the slightest idea that he was coming; and he foresaw a surprise both general and unwelcome.

They entered Saubat river on the 2nd of April. Lingering here to cut wood for the steamer's fires, they surprised a tribe of Dinkas—a black, pastoral people, who worship wizards. The chief was with great difficulty induced to come on board with four of his tribe. He was in full dress, says Gordon:—a necklace. His form of salutation was first to softly lick the back of the white man's hands; then to hold his face to his own and make as if he were spitting. He proved himself a glutton and a tyrant by devouring his neighbour's portion of the general meal. After this he and his liege-men sang a hymn of praise and thanks to Gordon. They then proceeded to crawl to kiss his feet, but this luxury was not allowed them. They were enriched with a splendid present of beads, and went off rejoicing.

Resuming her way the steamer cleared the Bahr Gazelle in twelve hours; for though the river is very narrow there, and the banks are marshy, the 'sudd,' as I have said, had been cleared, and the passage was easy. Gordon did not find the look of the place so bad as might have been expected, considering the many that have died there. What troubled him most was the mosquitoes. He found them worse than any he had ever endured: in China, at Batoum, or on the Danube itself.

On April 4th they reached the Bahr Gazelle, where it joins the Gondokoro river, and forms a small lake rimmed with morasses. As they steamed on they met swarms of natives, many of whom had rubbed their faces with wood-ash, and made unto themselves complexions the colour of slate-pencil. These, the Governor-General found, were badly fed and in much suffering. 'What a mystery, is it not?' he writes, 'why they are created!—a life of fear and misery night and day! One does not wonder at their not fearing death. No one can conceive the utter misery of these lands—heat and mosquitoes day and night all the year round. But I like the work, for I believe I can do a great deal to ameliorate the lot of the people.'

At Bohr, a slavers' hold, the inhabitants were anything but civil; they had heard of the Khartoum decree. At the mission at Sainte-Croix, on the other hand, the people came out with songs and dances as the steamer went by. She cast anchor off Gondokoro on the 16th of April, twenty-four days after leaving Khartoum. The townsmen were amazed by Gordon's advent, for they had not even heard of his nomination. He found his seat of Government scarce less dangerous than wretched. Half a mile from its walls, owing to the ill-treatment to which the natives had been subjected, the Governor-General himself would have gone in peril of his life.

Still, though the state of the people was as bad as it could well be, he was confident that he could relieve their sufferings and bring about a better state of things for them. The toughest part of his task, he felt, would be to win their confidence.

In this spirit we find him constantly travelling between point and point, making friends with his subjects as he goes. To some he gives grain; others he employs in planting maize—an occupation they had hitherto feared to follow, as always when they sowed a patch of ground, their little harvest was taken from them; till it came to pass that these poor negroes flocked about him in great numbers. They mostly had a grievance: sometimes they wanted him to buy their children, whom they were too poor to feed themselves. Important in the achievement of this admirable result was his prompt and resolute action with their tyrants, the slavers. These blackguards, he found, were often in collusion with the Government. They stole the cattle and kidnapped their owners, and they shared the double booty with officials of a liberal turn of mind. Thus, in these early days, through the curiosity of his interpreter, who got possession of some letters from a gang of man-hunters to the Governor of Fashoda, he discovered that 2,000 stolen cows and a number of kidnapped negroes were on their way from these gentry to their estimable correspondent. He confiscated all

the cattle, as he could not return them to their owners, who were too far off. The slaves he either sent home or bought himself. They, poor creatures, were only too glad to be with him; they showed it by coming up and trying to touch his hands, and even the hem of his garment; and he did not hesitate to go among them alone. One of the slaves recaptured on this occasion was a Dinka chief, and him he turned to good account. The chief slavers he took and cast into prison. Afterwards he discovered useful qualities in them, and took them into his employ: dealing with them, in fact, as he had dealt with the Chinese rebels, whom he first conquered and then enlisted.

In the middle of May he went down to Berber to fetch his baggage which had been left behind. An interesting account of what happened to him on the journey is given by one of his staff: 'Colonel Gordon turned up last Saturday, having run down from Khartoum in three days; but he very nearly came to grief on the way at one of the cataracts. There were two fellows at the wheel, and one wanted to go to the left and the other to the right of the reef, and between them were making straight on it, when Gordon rushed to the helm and just made a shave of it; but as it was they carried away a lot of paddles, and had rather a smash. *When he arrived he put us all to rights at Berber, and was very kind and considerate.* He soon

put the very troublesome gentleman who was ordering us about in his proper place, and was surprised to find him with us at all.'

At this time, and for a period of nearly two months, Gordon was at Saubat river. The country was utterly forlorn and desolate; the slavers had passed that way, and scarcely a soul was to be seen for miles. But for his passionate interest in humanity, the solitude must have proved overpowering. The land lay so remote from even Cairene civilization, that the Arab troops were deported there for punishment, as the Russians to Siberia. Nevertheless Gordon retained his health and spirits. He was never idle; and when his public duties were done, he amused himself by inventing traps for the huge rats who shared his cabin.

He had no reason to regret his investment in captured slaves. They were strong, hardy rascals, and they worked well for him, especially in transferring the station to the other side of the river, to a drier site and better water. There he awaited the slave convoy, and a drove of asses (180 strong) from Khartoum. Meanwhile he interested himself in the natives who sought his aid, and dealt, as he knew how, with a captured cargo of slaves. He forgot no ministration, however trivial; he left no duty, however small, undone. 'She had her tobacco up to the last,' he writes of a poor old woman, whom he fed up for weeks, but

who died at last. 'What a change from her misery! I suppose she filled her place in life as well as Queen Elizabeth.' To him she was as much as his 'kings' at Gravesend—as anyone in need of solace or aid.

Towards the end of August he left this miserable place for Gondokoro, where much trouble awaited him. As he expected, he found his staff in discontent, and intrigue at height among his officials. He arrived on the 4th of September; and with Raouf Bey, commander of the troops at Gondokoro, a man hostile to him, and Abou Saoud, his lieutenant, he went to receive the salaams of the functionaries, officers, and soldiers. Through the influence of Abou Saoud, all seemed quiet among the tribes; the chiefs had submitted, and were peaceably disposed. But Raouf Bey was jealous of Abou Saoud; he was angry, too, because Gessi and Anson had been sent to Bahr Gazelle, with three large boats and twenty Arab soldiers, to reconnoitre for stations and make friends with the tribes. With all his opportunities, as Gordon knew, he had done absolutely nothing; so of Raouf he had resolved to be rid, and to start him for Cairo with letters to the Khedive. Another heavy trouble was that his staff was down with ague and fever to a man, so that, worn to a shadow himself, he had to play sick-nurse day and night. Linant, Campbell, and Russell were very ill (the latter in Gordon's own tent); and Gessi, before his departuro

for Bahr Gazelle, had only recently recovered from fever. Even his servants were helpless. Add to this that he had all the money arrangements and officers' accounts on his hands, and the picture will be complete. Linant died the day he left Gondokoro.

Gordon's next move was to Rageef: to build a new station on higher and healthier ground. There he found that Abou Saoud had been taking elephant-tusks from the chiefs, and deceiving him in other ways. It was the beginning of the end for the ex-slaver. He made himself so objectionable by bullying the people, and coming into the Governor's cabin and usurping the Governor's functions, that there was nothing for it but there and then to get rid of him. Gordon dictated the following letter, and sent Abou down to Gondokoro;

'Abou, when I took you up at Cairo, there was not an Arab or a foreigner who would have thought of employing you; but I trusted to your protestation, and did so. When I got to Gondokoro, you were behaving properly, and I congratulated myself on your appointment to the high post I gave you. Soon, however, I came little by little to repent my action, and to find out my fair treatment was thrown away. You tried to deceive me about ——, about ——, and about ——; you misstated ——; you told me falsely about ——, etc., etc. To come to more personal matters, you strangely forgot our relative positions; you have forced your way into my private apartments at all times, have disputed my orders in my presence, and treated all my

other officers with arrogance, showing me that you are an ambitious, grasping man, and unworthy of the authority I gave you. If you do this under my eyes, and at the beginning of your work, what will you do when away from me? Now hear my decision. Your appointment is cancelled, and you will return to Gondokoro and wait my orders. Remember, though I remove you from your office, you are still a Government officer, subject to its laws, which I shall not hesitate to put in force against you if I find you intriguing.

'I then went on to say,' writes Gordon, 'that his scheme to cause the troops to revolt had never alarmed me, and that I felt confident that they would see their interest lay with me and not with him; so it ended with my saying that I would be merciful to him, and let him go away on leave, not to return.'

It was fortunate that Gordon was thus summary, for there is no doubt that he would have been in peril of his life. Abou Saoud had tried to get up a mutiny among his own soldiers, a set of cannibals from the Niam-Niam, in order to force Gordon to let him go to Duffli with the steamer, which was in parts, and had to be pieced together at that place. The black soldiers said they would not go without him; so Gordon, who had some time before proclaimed as a motto for all the word 'Hurryat,' or 'Liberty,' said, 'Do not go at all then; but you will not make me send Abou Saoud with you; that would infringe my Hurryat.' He then added that as they were in receipt of Government pay, he expected that they would obey him. This seems to have

frightened them; so they came and begged him to let them go with the steamer.

So very little help had he from some of his subordinates, that the Commandant at Gondokoro sent up to him, with a mountain howitzer, old ammunition tubes instead of new ones; they had been recently used for a salute. This humorous proceeding imperilled Gordon's life. It left him defenceless, and with only ten men, in a place where no Arab would have stayed without a hundred.

The climate at Rageef was much better than at Gondokoro, and the country had better features. Gordon set to work to instruct the people in the use of money. This was not easy, as the custom was for the chiefs to farm their men, and take payment in beads or calico. Gordon's first aim was to stop the system, and to this end he showed the people that they might earn for themselves. First, he gave a man so many beads for his work; next, he gave him half a piastre, or one penny, and offered to sell him beads for that amount. The men soon caught the idea, and Gordon fixed certain prices for certain things, and put together little lots for sale: in fact, as he himself says, he made a regular shop, much to the discontent of all the old hands, who were dead against 'these new-fangled ideas.' He found that many of the negroes did not work well on daily wages, so he introduced the system of task-

work. He gave himself up to the amusement of the soldiers, and delighted them with a magic lantern and a magnesium-wire light, and by firing a gun 150 yards off with a magnetic exploder.

Meantime, three weeks having gone by since Abou Saoud's dismissal, Gessi and Kemp asked Gordon to reinstate him. Gordon forgave his ex-lieutenant. 'One wants some forgiveness one's self,' he said, 'and it is not a dear article.' He wrote to Abou, saying that if he liked he could join Kemp at Duffli, and take Rageef on his way. On the night of his arrival at Rageef, Abou asked for his old post. Gordon gave him what he asked, and talked about his journey to Duffli; whereupon Abou said he could not go without 100 soldiers. As there were not so many on hand, he had to stay where he was. He hated the new system of buying for money; and later on, while some ivory was selling, he was seen in earnest conversation with a certain chief. After this not a negro came near the place, though crowds had been there regularly before his arrival. Presently Gessi wrote that some one was with Gordon whom the blacks did not like, and that they would not come over while he was there. Gordon was wroth that no name was given, but he at once concluded that Abou was the man. The mystery was soon cleared up. Gordon soon found that the chief referred to, who had hitherto shown himself friendly,

had been intriguing with another for a canoe to be used in an attack on the station. Gordon opined that probably Abou had egged him on—had told him the Pasha was coming to take his cows; or that the sight alone of the ex-slaver had aroused his fears. In any case, a conspiracy was undoubtedly afoot when Gordon came back to Rageef. He had been to Gondokoro to arrange for Abou's departure, when he met the hostile chief on the road, and was invited into his hut. As it was dark, he declined to go. Next day the chief visited him with a great bulk of armed men, and after some apparently friendly intercourse withdrew. Soon after he and his following returned, and surrounded the tent. Gordon, who had watched their movements, got down his guns; he then told the would-be rebel to walk off, and the would-be rebel at once obeyed. He was bent on mischief; but the lonely hero was too much for him.

Abou was by no means the only traitor in the camp. It was not long ere Gordon learned that the passage of a convoy of slaves on their way to Fashoda had been connived at by his Mudir. This piece of ill news was soon followed by another. Kemp, the engineer, came in from Duffli, at the head of the cataract, 134 miles from Rageef, where he had been trying to build and launch the steamer, thence to work down to the Albert Nyanza. Some tribesmen there

had come to blows with the slave soldiers and then robbed them, so that he had to come back, leaving the greater part of the steamer behind. But in other directions the prospect was more cheering. Long returned from a visit to Mtesa, King of Uganda, to report a good reception from that suspicious monarch. The discovery of a water-passage between Urundogani and Foweira was another important event, and is commented on by Gordon in one of his letters as matter for great congratulation.

During these months, November and December, there was a great deal of illness among the members of the staff. In fact, the majority were down with fever, and had to leave one after the other, their leader being almost alone in resisting the climate, though he was fast making himself ill by nursing and waiting on the others. At length things got so bad that he had to give orders that all illness should be kept away from him, and that the staff should not come near him except on duty. Sickness, however, so increased —probably owing to a heat unusual even in these horrible regions—that at last only one of the original staff was left, eight having gone from the place. Then Gordon made up his mind to move the station twelve miles off, to Lardo, which stood higher above the marshes. This involved a great deal of work; but

in four days he got clear of Gondokoro, and before the end of the year was settled in his new quarters.

'Gordon has certainly done wonders since his stay in this country,' says one of his staff. 'When he arrived, only ten months ago, he found 700 soldiers in Gondokoro, who did not dare to go a hundred yards from that place, except when armed and in small bands, on account of the Baris, who were exasperated at the way Baker had treated them. With these 700 men Gordon has garrisoned eight stations, namely, at Saubat, at Ratachambe Bohr, Lardo, Rageef, Fatiko, Duffli, and Makrake, the frontier of the Niam-Niam country. Baker's expedition cost the Egyptian Government £1,170,247, while Gordon has already sent up sufficient money to Cairo to pay for all the expenses of his expedition, including not only the sums required for last year, but the amount estimated for the actual one as well.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE LITTLE KHEDIVE.

CHIEF among Gordon's projects for 1875 was the junction of the stations of Gondokoro and Foweira by a chain of fortified posts a day's journey apart. The stations were a six months' march from each other; the journey could only be undertaken by a body of 100 men. After the change, travelling was much more rapid; and a company of ten was large and strong enough for safety. Gordon also proposed to concentrate himself in the south, and open a route to Mombaz Bay, 250 miles north of Zanzibar; and should Victoria Lake turn out as large as it was reported, he looked to making it much easier of access. These plans he had laid before the Khedive, and had asked him to send a steamer with 150 men to Mombaz Bay, there to establish a station, and so push towards Mtesa's country. All these reforms were important, for in the then state of affairs the whole north of his province was worthless marsh and desert, and the navigation to Khar-

toum was extremely difficult, the Arab mariners being quite unskilled, while firewood was growing scarce. It was part of the Khedive's purpose to hoist the Egyptian flag on the Albert Nyanza. To do this, Gordon chose the western bank of the river, and worked his way along to Duffli, which lies some 800 miles due south of Khartoum towards Lake Victoria; with the stream on his left, he could only be attacked from the right.

Meantime he had received news from Foweira, 100 miles farther south of Duffli, that Kaba Rega, King of Unyoro, in league with the old slavers now ostensibly in the Khedive's service, was planning an attack thereon. The officers of the station had expelled the slave-hunters from their service. Some fifty came down to Gordon, and were ordered on to Khartoum, with ninety other bandits from the Fatiko province. He had recaptured fifty-two slaves, and he describes the lamentations of the kidnappers as terrible. He now determined to drive Kaba Rega out of his kingdom, and give it to Rionga, who, in 1872, had been Sir Samuel Baker's Vakeel.

But before these plans could be even set in train, he had to deal with a troublesome chief named Bedden. To Bedden, in the autumn of the previous year, he had sent an envoy with presents. Bedden replied that the next ambassador would be killed. Next, Bedden, who ruled a district very near the station at

Rageef, attacked a friendly chief in the neighbourhood. Gordon, though averse from the step, felt that the only means of bringing about his submission would be to make a raid, and drive off his cattle. He therefore sent sixty men east of the river, while he himself, with one officer and ten men, sailed up the western bank to the islands where the cattle-pens were. It was moonlight when the raiders landed; and as they marched along the shore to Bedden's camp, which was fifteen miles off, they fell in with some mighty hippopotami. Gordon, as they stood with their vast hides glistening in the moonlight, playfully waved his handkerchief at them, but they answered the friendly greeting by 'plumping into the river with a great splash.'

The boat then struck a shoal, and Gordon, fearing for the men in her, sent her back. While he was giving these orders, nine of his party went on without him. He, with the two men left and an interpreter, soon found himself within earshot of the cattle-pens. They were, he writes, in a very bad military position, inasmuch as they were open to attack from the front and the left alike. On starting, the two detachments had had orders to close in on their commander. There was, however, not much faith to be placed in them. The Soudanese, indeed, were in such a state of panic, that they mistook some rocks on the rising ground for villages. The plight was a bad one; but there was no

help for it, and Gordon lay down and slept, till he was roused by the dawn and the sound of a drum from the kraals. He thus describes the end of the affair:

'The cattle at night are enclosed in *seribas* or kraals, with one entrance. The warriors sleep inside. The mode of attack is to put a few men near the entrance, with orders to fire three shots at dawn, before the cattle are let out; for if once out, you can scarcely catch one of them. On hearing the shots the warriors escape, beating the war-drum if they have time. They never defend the *seribas;* and it is always the best policy to let them go harmless, as the cows are the great object. As the red glow of a hot day increased, we heard, on the far-away hill opposite to us, to the east, the three signal-shots; and then our island *seriba* sounded its *nozan* or drum. It was a mild one, and was not taken up by other drums, as I expected; then silence ensued. As day advanced, we saw the supposed villages of the soldiers were rocks, and not a native was to be seen. Soon afterwards some appeared, but they seemed puzzled by the three signals, and went off. Before long our allies—the friendly Sheikh's people—came up; and some of their little warriors swam across to the island, but reported that the Bedden warriors were in the midst of the cows, and shot arrows at them when they approached. However, these soon went off, and we got the cows. We rewarded, with what was not our own, the 'friendlies,' and came back. The other party on the east coolly passed down the other side with herds of cattle, and never paid any attention to us. The party on the west were never seen by us. It appears that they reached the scene of their operations at midnight, and sent a guide on to explore.

This guide met a woman going for water; he tried to catch her; she cried out and gave the alarm, so the natives let out the cows. However, including our herd of 600 head of cattle, we got altogether 2,600 head; so that without any effusion of blood on either side, or burning of villages, we punished Bedden severely.'

Next day Gordon made a similar expedition against a chief named Lococo. He, however, had had warning from a neighbouring tribe into whose territory he drove his herds; some 500 cows were taken all the same. About a fortnight later the Governor was out riding, when he suddenly came upon Bedden, and found him old and blind. Seeing some natives seated under a tree, he asked them if they were Bedden's people; whereupon they pointed to an old man among them, and said 'Bedden.' Gordon went up to him, gave him his whistle and some tobacco, and told him that if his tribe behaved well, nothing would be taken from them. Two days after the old chief returned the visit, when Gordon returned him twenty of his cows: a piece of generosity which had an excellent effect on the tribes.

For some time Gordon moved from one station to another, shooting hippopotami, cleaning guns, mending watches and musical-boxes. He was waiting for the Nile to fall, that he might get his steamers up from Khartoum, and find out whether there was any means of passing the rapids at Duffli. First of all, however,

he had to march some thirty miles to southward, with forty Soudanese, fifty Makraka recruits, and a gang of porters. He got as far as Kerri, and, returning to Rageef, found that the Nile was navigable between. While encamped at Kerri, a thunderstorm gave his ragamuffins an opportunity of pillaging some houses under pretence of taking shelter. Gordon would not allow them to enter the villages, and got them camped under some trees. Suddenly, in the midst of the storm, shots were fired, and the cry arose that they were attacked. A reconnaissance showed no enemy of any kind. Nevertheless the men insisted they had been attacked, and fell to sacking the houses, while some actually fired on the natives on the opposite bank, to give their abominable stratagem an appearance of truth. Of such was his material for the regeneration of the Soudan.

From Rageef he went north again to Lardo, and then, with 100 soldiers to form a station, back to Kerri. He had to get three nuggars (strong boats used on the Nile) to withstand the charges of the hippopotami To put these nuggars through the violent eddies was both difficult and dangerous. Sixty or eighty went hauling at the boat; and if the strain was slackened for an instant, the boat capsized. No sooner had Gordon settled things, to some extent, at Kerri, than he was off again to Lardo, to upset the do-nothing

Governor, and transport him to Khartoum (which he called his Botany Bay). Here, while waiting for his steamers (stuck fast at Khartoum for some five months through mismanagement), he made up for the ex-Governor's loss of time by himself attending to every detail of the administration. His extraordinary energy received a new impulse from the inactivity of his Arabs. All day long they stood and stared at their strange Governor—'the little Khedive' as they called him—watching his every movement as if it were something miraculous; noting, in an ecstasy of amazement, how he would come down from his divan and put his kingship behind him, while he cleaned his guns or contrived a rocket-machine out of an old pump.

At last the nuggars were started up the river, and a tremendous business it was to get the lazy Arabs to work. They went 'as if they were at a funeral;' they hid in the grass whenever they could get a chance of shirking. Sometimes a rope would break, and a nuggar go off on a six-knot current; sometimes the waters would rush from both sides of the rocks, and tear the mast right out. Then there were the difficulties with shy and unknown tribes to be encountered; there was the encumbrance of over 100 women and children who accompanied the soldiers to be dealt with; there was the army of wizards beating the water and shrieking incantations to speed the white men on.

In this last amusement, Gordon, taking the lead, would 'pray the nuggars up,' he says; as he used to pray up the men of the Ever-Victorious Army when they wavered in the breaches. It was a picture unmatched in its contrasts of torpor and energy, of Eastern and Western faith.

All this time it was impossible to judge what real progress they had made, or to fix their whereabouts, though sometimes they got over eight or ten miles a day. The tribes, besides being exceedingly timid, knew nothing of distance, and could not count. When asked how far off was this place or that, they invariably pointed to some point in the sky, to show that when the sun was there the traveller would arrive. Sometimes they were inclined to show fight; but the burning of a single hut or the discharge of a rifle brought them to their senses. It was, however, impossible to get any sort of help from them, either by persuasion or by force. And one day, in the middle of August, the need of help was desperate. One of the nuggars broke loose, and floated down into the middle of the rapids. Another boat had to be sent in pursuit, and, in Gordon's absence, it got entangled in the rocks. This delayed the party a whole day. They got off at last, however, and arrived without further accident at Laboré. Here they waited for ropes for their further journey, and for the arrival of 250 soldiers from Lardo, together with some

natives from Makadé. The tribes were wroth to see them encamped, but Gordon put things right by shooting a hippopotamus and giving them the carcase. They came about him in a most friendly spirit, whereupon he showed one of them how to fire his rifle; I need scarcely say that he held it while his pupil drew the trigger. But though the tribes fraternized with him, they soon attacked another station a mile from his own. Feeling that with so many women and children about it would not do to be thus molested, he kept a sharp look-out, and did not allow the negroes within a thousand yards of his hut. At night, to guard against an assault, he put up posts with telegraph-wires between them, at a good height, so as to stop a rush. Meanwhile, the wizards were seen cursing their enemy and waving him off the face of the earth. Gordon now and then threw a bullet into them, and spied the movements of their spies, who slunk about the camp, suddenly disappearing in the long grass or maize. Very soon Linant, a brother of the Linant who died at Gondokoro, came in with a party from Makadé. Gordon's opinion of his Arab soldiers was now to be confirmed under extremely painful and trying circumstances. He had passed thirty men over the river to the east bank, as he believed they would find his steamer in the east channel. The moment they landed the natives came down on them, as they lay in the

grass before the station. Gordon at once crossed over. The moment they saw him coming they made a rush at his men, but were repulsed. He then attempted a parley, but they would none of it. They knew him for the chief, and they made an attempt to surround him. He let them come quite near, and then drove them back with bullets. In the attack, they showed great courage, crawling, in the teeth of a heavy fire, close up to him on their bellies—an attitude which made it most difficult to hit them. At this pass Linant proposed to cross to the east bank, and burn their houses; and Gordon, fearing that unless he took reprisals they would attack the steamer, agreed. At eight o'clock, on the 25th August, he sent off thirty-six soldiers, two officers, and three irregulars. About midday he heard firing, and then saw Linant, in a red shirt he had given him, on a hill. The party remained in view for about two hours, when they disappeared. Later in the afternoon Gordon saw some thirty or forty blacks running down to the river. He concluded that they had gone to see the steamer; and as they ran, he dropped a few bullets among them. Ten minutes later he saw one of his own detachment on the opposite bank without his musket, and he at once sent a boat to bring him across. The fellow declared that the natives had disarmed him, and had killed the whole party besides. Gordon had only thirty men at his

station, and it was not possible to communicate with the steamer where there were ninety more. But he was determined to act, though his thirty men showed signs of panic. As the station was not fortified, he thought it best to move down to the other; but this was not easy to do. The wives and children of the soldiers had first to be disposed of; then there were many mishaps with the boats, one of which, filling with water, stopped the passage of the others, and delayed the party till dawn. Happily they were not molested by the tribesmen; these, with one exception, held resolutely aloof from the proceedings. The exception was a wizard. With singular indiscretion, this sage elected to survey the retreat from the top of a rock. Here he grinned and jeered and vaticinated while Gordon was giving his orders. The Governor took up his rifle. 'I don't think that's a healthy spot from which to deliver an address,' he said; and the wizard prophesied no more.

At last the other station was reached. Only one soldier was found on the field: and a boat was sent to bring him into safety. It turned out eventually that four of Linant's men had escaped, but that Linant himself had been the victim of Gordon's red shirt. It had maddened the natives, who had come at him with a rush, and speared him where he stood. The whole affair, as far as can be gathered, seems to have been

the result of a want, not of ammunition (every man had thirty rounds in his pouch, and there were two boxes of cartridges besides), but of discipline among Gordon's wretched soldiers. The party got scattered, and the natives came suddenly upon Linant. The trumpeter was one of the first to fall, and it was impossible to call the men together again. Gordon's grief at the loss of his friend was very great, the more so as he had lent him the fatal shirt. When Linant proposed the attack, he assured his chief that he was used to the work, and that he had defeated thousands of the tribesmen on his way back from King Mtesa's territory.

At the end of August the Governor of Fatiko arrived with more soldiers, and Gordon now had nearly 500 men. He therefore at once set to work to punish the natives by means of razzias. His first essay resulted in the capture of 200 cows and 1,500 sheep. The chief's daughter, too, was seized; and Gordon sent her father a message that if he would submit he could have her again. The excitement caused by these raids was terrific. The tribes gathered on the hills and indulged in the wildest war-dances, while, night and day, the magicians were hard at work imploring curses and producing incantations. Poles were set up with the heads of Linant's party at top. The bodies had been buried for fear of ghosts, but the heads were kept as trophies.

By the middle of September these many difficulties were lightened by the arrival from Fatiko of Nuehr Agha, a capital officer. At last the steamer was got off, and the expedition set out for Laboré. There were many halts, however, occasioned by the Arabs' incapacity to carry out orders, or indeed to do in any way as they were told. They arrived on the 24th, established their station on a hill, and found the natives friendly. Gordon spent much of his time in exploring the country, about which he could gain not the slightest information from any of his followers. One raid—only one—he had to make on a troublesome tribe between Moogie and Laboré. He was in even better health than usual, owing to the helpful presence of Nuehr Agha, and he was able, without breaking down, to walk twenty miles in the burning sun.

At last they came to Duffli. They camped between two high ranges of mountains, but only to find that the idea of taking up the steamer or the nuggars was hopeless. The Fola Falls were impassable for two miles. It was a great disappointment; but Gordon consoled himself by reflecting that up to this point the river had been proved navigable at certain seasons for steamers, and all the year round for small boats, and that much good would come of the line of posts which connected this southern portion of the province with the north, since it would now be difficult for the tribes to continue

their hostilities. Besides this, it was easy to find the way and to know of everybody's whereabouts: to say nothing of the comfort of a plentiful supply of wood and of water along the line.

The halt at Duffli lasted a little over a fortnight. The tribes were a quiet race, living in kraals and out of sight, so that it was an event to see a human being. The silence and monotony of the place affected Gordon's spirits. Nor were they improved by news from certain of his stations. From Laboré he heard that his interpreter, without whose aid he had managed all this time, was dead; that one of his commanders had allowed a man to go alone between two posts, and that the man had been murdered on the way; that at one place the sentries slept all night, and that an attack by the tribes was meditated on another. In the midst of this, he was seized with ague, and had to shift his quarters. He crossed the river and settled at Fashelie, a place nine miles from Duffli, on higher ground, and surrounded for hundreds of miles by yellow grass which stood six feet high. Hither, with the aid of fifty camels, it was his intention to move all his belongings along the Asua River, which at Duffli joins the Nile. Ere he did so, however, he had to rout out and send to Khartoum a gang of Dongola slave-dealers, who had settled at Fashelie and were making raids on the tribes.

It was all-important, before proceeding further south, to thoroughly subdue the tribes round Moogie, since if the country was left in its then disturbed state, the communication between the posts from north to south would be constantly subject to interruption. At this place Gordon found an irritating letter, full of complaints from the Khedive. He at once wrote three telegrams, telling the Khedive that he should be at Cairo in April, and that his successor had better be sent up without delay. Before these telegrams were despatched, however, he received from the Khedive a letter in a very different strain. It stated that His Highness had placed Admiral McKillop under his command, and had sent him with three men-of-war and 600 men to Juba, on which place he proposed that he should march. Gordon, feeling that it would be unfair to the Khedive to resign at such a pass, unpacked his baggage and determined to continue his work, much to the astonishment of his followers, who did not know what this packing and unpacking might mean. All the same, he resolved not to fall in with the Khedive's plans, and made up his mind not to march on Juba with the wretched troops at his command.

Scarce two months back he had lost his interpreter; now there befell a new calamity. His servant fell sick of fever and died in a few hours. Gordon sorrowed much, though he had but little time for sorrow. His

hands were full; he was at the heart of his work; and in a raid on some offending tribes he drove off over 1,500 head of cattle. This achievement, and a visit to Laboré, for the parts of the steamer, brought the busy year to a close. Successful so far, he was resolved on one thing more, and that was not to explore the Albert Nyanza. He had told the Khedive in 1874 that he would not do it; and though the feat was generally expected of him by the Geographical Society and the world at large, he was contented to have prepared the way for another. What he wanted to do was to push on to Lake Victoria Nyanza, and fulfil his promise to the Khedive of hoisting the Egyptian flag upon its waters. The steamer which was to enable him to do this was to follow him on his journey south, Gessi having been left at Duffli to put it together and launch it, with the life-boat.

The year (1876) opened with a disappointment. On his way from Fashelie to Fatiko, a distance of nearly fifty miles southwards, Gordon was overtaken by a courier who came to inform him that an influential chief under arrest had been allowed to escape by the guard. The circumstance was the more annoying, as the prisoner might have been of great service in bringing about an understanding with his tribe. At Fatiko Gordon stayed but a week. He then pushed on to Fowcira, a hundred miles nearer Lake Victoria Nyanza;

The dreary drag through jungle grass and thorns tore his clothes to tatters. His object was to swoop down upon Kaba Rega, at Mrooli, put Rionga in his place, and establish a post. Rionga, a fine-looking fellow with prominent eyes, arrived at Foweira three days after him, and they left together. The journey to Mrooli was no better than the one just completed. Kaba Rega had taken to his heels, and transferred himself, magic stool and all, to Masindi, and Rionga was made king in his stead. Rionga, however, was in mortal dread of Kaba Rega, who was only a few miles off; and Gordon saw that it would be necessary to set up Anfina, another Unyoro magnate, at Masindi; since if Kaba Rega were unmolested, he would have to station 150 men at Mrooli to keep him in check, while, with garrisons at Masindi and Mrooli, there was nothing to be feared. 'I do so cordially dislike these wretched troops,' he writes.

'They started off this morning to capture some cattle and will soon be back, and there will be fine accounts of their bravery. Whoever has Masindi and Mrooli, to him or them the natives turn, so that, Kaba Rega being a refugee, the capture of Masindi renders him harmless. I have to go to all these places myself, for these slaves would never go. With troops one is not sure of, and in whom you have no confidence, I can imagine no position more trying. In all cases commanders have some reliable men. There is a moral conviction which it is necessary for soldiers to have,

namely, that they will conquer; let this be wanting, and they are worthless. The Khedive has taken not the least notice of my complaints of them, but urges me on still further. What is it to him what tenfold additional trouble I have to take in consequence?'

Anfina was set up at Masindi accordingly. This made him Rionga's superior, and Rionga was furious. Gordon, when these matters were settled, went back to Fatiko, and joined Gessi at Duffli in February. A month later, after much trouble, his preparations were complete, and Gessi started with the two boats for Magungo and the Lakes. While his faithful lieutenant was hoisting the Egyptian flag, and being driven by a storm into the thick of Kaba Rega's troops, Gordon proceeded with his survey and with the administration of the various stations, going as far south again as Lardo, and back once more to Kerri. On his arrival here on April the 12th, he wrote home:

'I have definitely, I hope, settled the stations along the line from Duffli to Lardo. Lardo and Duffli are termini; Rageef, Bedden, Moogie, and Iyoo (a new station he had just made), are postal stations; and Laboré and Kerri are main stations, and possess passages across the river, and enable raids to be made on the east bank, where a vast extent of country exists. Through this country used to pass the old land road south.'

Of course, these journeys were not without adventures,

and of one of these I give an account in Gordon's own words:

'You may remember that last year I had here a great deal of trouble to pass a rope across the river. I got one over—or rather the boatmen did—easily this time. However, on the other side the rope caught on a rowlock of the boat, and the current bore down with such force that it was difficult to release it. One of the men was hammering the rowlock while I lifted on the rope; the rowlock slewed, and off went the rope. Before I could let go, it dragged me into the river; but I soon rose and caught the rudder, and was all right. A Reis (captain) jumped in after me, and his chemise got swept over his head, so when he bobbed up near me, he was like the veiled prophet of Khorassan. I caught him by his veil, and we got out all safely. Yesterday as we were hauling at the rope (I being seated under or near a tree to which we had it attached), a whip-snake was shaken down, and tried to obtain cover between me and the ground. However, I got clear of it.'

At this time he was much alone, and his letters are long and interesting. He began to get anxious about Gessi; but that valiant Italian returned towards the end of April, after sailing round the Victoria Nyanza in nine days. He found it 140 miles long and 50 wide. The natives were hostile, and refused to parley till Gessi went away, for they took him by his colour for a fiend. But at Unyoro, Kaba Rega's chiefs had sent in their submission, and all was quiet.

There was little to do at this time, as they were still waiting the completion of the steamer; and with nothing else to think of, it amused them not a little when the wizard of the tribe near Kerri announced that he should not allow them a single drop of rain, unless the Government gave him cows:—'Which it has not done,' says Gordon; 'and it is very odd that all around we have had rain, except near the station.'

Gessi, during this period of inaction, made himself ill by smoking and lounging all day long. But Gordon made up his mind to give the three weeks he would have to wait for the steamer to exploring an 'unknown branch' of the Nile. Away he went to Lardo. Here, during a storm, he was roused in the night by loud cries and shots close to the house. 'I guessed what it was,' he says, 'and rushed out. Three elephants had chosen to try to land at the place cut in the bank to enable the servants to get water from the river. The sentry, however, saw them, fired at them, and made them give up their intention. You see, if they landed and got frightened, they would break down my house in a moment, and do a deal of damage. This is a favourite landing-place for them.'

A fortnight later, homeward-bound for Kerri, he writes:

'During a heavy thunderstorm to-day, while putting the side of my tent straight, I received, at the moment

of a flash of lightning, a couple of severe shocks similar to what a strong electric machine would give. What an escape! The verdict on people killed by lightning was in olden times "killed by the visitation of God." The heathens considered death by lightning was a special mark of distinction.'

On his return he learned at Laboré that Gessi's presence was necessary at Khartoum; and not long after he was able to say of him, 'Gessi is now a great man at Khartoum; he is my Vakeel-in-Chief, and has a lot of work.' On the other hand, we learn from him that 'Kaba Rega is now nearly deserted by all his adherents, and I hope soon to hear that this young man, repenting the evil of his ways, has made his submission.' Gordon expected to be able to concentrate in all 250 troops at Unyoro, which, in those parts, would make him a mighty power.

At this time he was in very much better health, and the worries of office do not seem to have troubled him as they had. His letters abound in speculations on the subject of the Lakes; and, despite his resolve not to explore, the exploring spirit was strong in him. He had been reading what Dr. Schweinfurth says of Lake Albert: 'that it may belong to the Nile basin, though this is not certain, inasmuch as with seventy miles between Lake Albert and Foweira, it would be presumptuous, without the ocular proof, to derive the river from the lake.' So on the 20th of July, he left Duffli

for Magungo, with the steamer and two life-boats. The steamer was not more than fifty feet long, and had but a couple of screws. The only way to the cabins was through the engine-room, down a breakneck ladder; but Gordon built a house on deck, and used the cabin as a storeroom. He took beads with him for the native chiefs. Writing from a place about half-way between Duffli and Magungo, he describes the river as varying in width from two to five miles, with no visible current, with a fringe of papyrus ten or twelve yards deep, and innumerable eyots of papyrus besides. He thought the rainy season was over, but in the night there was a tremendous shower; and as he had neglected to trench his tent, which he nearly always made it a rule to do, he was flooded out. He found Baker's maps wonderfully correct; and from these he had hoped to find a spot which would command a general view of the lake. But though he tried he failed. Of the tribes he remarked: 'It is odd that the totally naked tribes seem to be in one circular place, between Duffli and Fashoda, and that then you have a ring of partially naked, and then the clothed tribes. Adam knew he was naked, but these naked tribes have no notion of it whatever; this is some great mystery. Up here they are all clothed.'

He heard that Kaba Rega with six chiefs, but few soldiers, was about fifty-eight miles south of Masindi;

the ex-king had forty muskets with him, but no powder, and appeared to have territory on the other side of the Lake. A little later, about 300 of a tribe faithful to Kaba Rega, came down on a marauding expedition to Gordon's camp; but they were soon repelled. Early in August the party was three miles west of Murchison Falls, marching, some fifteen or twenty miles a day, now through pouring rain, then under a burning sun, through jungle and along ravines, and mapping the river as they went. They were often exposed to the attacks of the natives, who would suddenly appear and fling spears at them. 'I do not carry arms, as I ought to do,' says Gordon, 'for my whole attention is devoted to defending the nape of my neck from mosquitoes.' Having penetrated the country as far south as Nyamyango, he returned by river to Mrooli. It was a journey more dangerous even than the one by land; for in the many narrow channels through which they steered the natives stood in ambush among the papyri, and speared the boats as they pleased.

On the way from Mrooli to Masindi, Gordon discovered that the troops he had left in charge at the latter place were at Keroto, a day's journey on the other side of it. The consequence was that the tribes came down on him, and he was in no slight peril of defeat. His troops made no attempt to meet him. Between September 26, when he arrived, and

October 6, when he departed, he visited in turn Magungo, Murchison Falls, and Chibero, with a view to forming a line of posts from the Victoria Nile, or Somerset River, to the Lake. Then, having arranged with his force for an assault on Kaba Rega—who was severely handled, but who eventually went back to his own country—he returned to Khartoum, and thence by Esneh to Alexandria, his health and spirits as good as ever.

CHAPTER XII.

'CHILDE ROLAND.'

No sooner was Gordon in London, and it was known that he had not decided to resume his campaign in Upper Egypt, than people began to proclaim his fitness for the Governorship of Bulgaria. The *Times*, appreciative and admiring as always, published a vigorous account of the work he had been doing for the Khedive. 'Surely,' urged the writer 'his genius for government and command might be profitably utilized nearer home. If the jealousies of the Powers would permit him to be made Governor of Bulgaria, he would soon make that province as peaceful as an English county.' This led to the publication of a number of letters. All were in favour of the idea; some brought forward again some one or other of the young captain's many achievements to prove how apt for such a post he was. Gordon felt, however, that he could do nothing without first consulting with the Khedive. At the same time he was resolved not to go to Central Africa unless he went with greater

powers. His relations with the Governor-General of the Soudan, Ismail Pasha Yacoub, had made it impossible for him to deal successfully with the slave question outside his own province; and he had made up his mind that unless the Khedive threw in the Soudan, he would not return to his work. In this determination he left for Cairo early in the February of 1877. His visit was a complete and splendid triumph. Ismail Yacoub was removed, and Gordon was appointed Governor-General of the Soudan, with Darfour and the provinces of the Equator—a district 1,640 miles long and close on 700 wide. He was to have three deputies, one for the Soudan, one for Darfour, and one for the Red Sea littoral and Eastern Soudan; and it was formally declared that the objects of his governance were the improvement of the means of communication, and the absolute suppression of slavery. He was furthermore deputed to look into the Abyssinian affairs, and empowered to enter into negotiations with King John with a view to the settlement of matters in dispute between Abyssinia and Egypt.

The new enterprise was infinitely greater and more difficult than the old. Gordon was keenly alive to the tremendous responsibilities he had assumed. With all his strength of will, with all his trust in the guardianship of an unseen Power, we must not marvel if, alone in the great desert, with the results of ages of

evil and wrong, the mystic and the man of action sometimes give way in him, and he utter a cry of despair. We must not forget to look back at what he had already suffered and done, and to remember how he longed for quiet. We must bear it in mind that he is doing heroic work for the hero's true wages—the love of Christ and the good of his fellow-men. We must consider him as one who labours not for himself, but as the hand of the providence of God, and in the faith that his mission is of God's own setting. For all that, it is small wonder that out of the darkness which encompassed him on every side he sometimes cried out for rest—even the rest of death. The wonder is that in the teeth of perils so dire, and work so hard, and sufferings so manifold, he was allowed to pursue his mighty purpose, and be with us still.

He left Cairo for the eastern borders of his Government in the middle of February. He intended first to deal with Abyssinia. His last words on writing from the capital were these: 'I am so glad to get away, for I am very weary. I go up alone, with an infinite Almighty God to direct and guide me; and am glad to so trust Him as to fear nothing, and, indeed, to feel sure of success.'

Fully to understand the purpose of the mission to Abyssinia, it will be necessary to look at what had been going on there since King Theodore's death, in

1868, at the hands of Napier and the British. When Theodore was retreating to Magdala, a chieftain named Kasa offered Napier his services. They were accepted; and when our army evacuated the country he was rewarded by a gift of arms and ammunition. Thus furnished, Kasa at once swooped down on certain provinces, annexed them to his own dominion, and set up as a potentate under the style and title of Johannis, King of Abyssinia. At first his conquest made him nothing but enemies. Before long Theodore's heir took arms against him; but Johannis routed him, made him prisoner, and put him to the torture. This exploit strengthened his position, and in no great while he had succeeded in laying hands on the whole country, with the exception of Shoa and Bogos, and in achieving such an anarchy as made commerce impossible. Meanwhile Egypt had turned her attention to these parts, and in 1874 she annexed Bogos. This move, with her neighbourhood on the coast, to the west and to the south, caused her to be regarded with suspicion and alarm. The ill-feeling grew; and Walad el Michael, the hereditary Prince of Bogos, who had been imprisoned by Johannis, was released on the understanding that he should join in a crusade against her. In the war that ensued the Egyptians began by holding the Abyssinian forces too cheap, and were severely beaten. Later on, the Abyssinians carried the war into the

enemy's country, and were beaten in their turn. Meanwhile, Walad el Michael had quarrelled with Johannis (who after his first victory had robbed him of his spoils), and deserted to the enemy. After repulsing the Abyssinians Egypt asked a truce; and while this was in operation, Walad returned to Bogos with 7,000 men. There he set to work to make new mischief between the two countries. Johannis, finding that no decision as to terms of peace could be come to, and fearing the increased power of his enemy, the kinglet of Bogos, sent an envoy to Cairo offering to give up Hamacem. But the envoy was first of all detained, and afterwards, when he was released, was mobbed and pelted in the streets. Finally, he was packed off to Abyssinia, without a word of any kind. It was in the face of this insult—which was bitterly resented by Johannis—that Gordon went to Magdala as the Khedive's ambassador. His instructions were of the vaguest; his powers of the most imperfect. To orders in Arabic, which were practically useless, Mr. Vivian, the English Consul-General, had induced the Khedive to add the rider: 'Il y a sur la frontière d'Abyssinie des disputes; je vous charge de les arranger.'

Before the middle of March Gordon reached Massawa, and pushed across the desert to Keren, the capital of

* The vessel which took Gordon to Massawa was the steamship *Latif*, which on her return voyage was burnt at sea, about sixty miles from Suez.

Bogos, over which there had been so much fighting and bad blood. He journeyed on the back of that 'cushion-footed camel' which was destined to bear him over such vast tracts of country, and through scenes the most romantic. Once afoot and on the march, his great weariness fell from him, and the cheerful humour, the valiant simplicity, the frank and happy faith of old times, came back to cheer his way, and aid him in his noble enterprize.

Some miles from Keren he was met by 200 cavalry and infantry; and henceforth, whether marching or halting, he was carefully guarded by six or eight sentries, while eight or ten cavaliers stood at his stirrup and helped him off his camel. 'I can say truly,' he remarks, 'no man has ever been so forced into a high position as I have. How many I know to whom the incense would be the breath of their nostrils! To me it is irksome beyond measure. Eight or ten men to help me off my camel! as if I were an invalid. If I walk, everyone gets off and walks; so, furious, I get on again.'

Outside the capital on the 20th of March, the Bogos army was paraded to receive him; a band of musicians danced and played before and about him; while three mounted kettle-drummers rode on in front. He had not been three days at Keren before Walad el Michael came in with 200 infantry and 60 horsemen. Gordon

pitched tents for them, and took Walad into his own house. He ordered the missionaries to translate him a paper he had written, which explained that Egypt, deferring to the wishes of Europe, had determined not to carry on the war, and that he, her representative, proposed to ask a government of Johannis for Walad, or else to give him a government in his own territory. Walad went away, saying that he would think it over. Next morning the French priests came in with the news that he wanted a great deal more; whereupon Gordon sent for him, and told him plainly that he could only give him the government of two or three semi-hostile tribes. Then the chief gave in, and accepted the offer. He was urged by the priests to ask for more guns; but that request was peremptorily refused. The fact is, the situation was critical. Gordon, who had no force at his back, feared a *coup de main* on Walad's part.

'There were two courses open to me with respect to this Abyssinian question,' he wrote; 'the one, to stay at Massawa, and negotiate peace with Johannis and to ignore Walad el Michael, and if afterwards Walad el Michael turned rusty, to arrange with Johannis to come in and catch him. This certainly would have been easiest for me. Johannis would have been delighted, and we would be rid of Walad; but it would first of all be very poor encouragement to any future *secessions*, and would debase Egyptian repute. The

process of turning in the polecat (Johannis) to work out the weasel (Walad el Michael), would play havoc with the farmyard (the country) in which the operation was carried on, and it might be that the Polecat Johannis having caught the Weasel Walad, might choose to turn on the hens (which we are), and killing us, stay in the farmyard. For, to tell the truth, we, the hens, in the days of our prosperity, stole the farmyard, this country, from the polecats, when they were fighting among themselves, and before they knew we were hens. The other course open to me was to give Walad el Michael a government separated from Johannis, which I have done, and I think that was the best course; it was, no doubt, the most honest course, and though in consequence we are like a fat nut between the nut-crackers, it will, I hope, turn out well.'

Meantime Menelek, King of Shoa, Johannis's enemy in the south, had descended on Gondar and taken it. Johannis had gone with Aloula, a good general, to meet him; and it was probable that Ras Bario, the King's uncle, who had his forces near Massawa, might rebel in his nephew's absence. Gordon cordially wished that something could be done with Walad el Michael, for he threatened to march on Hamacem, and complicate matters between the peacemaker and the King. Had he chosen to arm the people in Bogos, they would soon have disposed of Walad and his hordes; but they would have disposed of Gordon and his followers also. Through all these complications, however, there shone this gleam of hope for him: that

Johannis, being sore beset, would get frightened, and sign the treaties he had brought in his pocket. It was a relief to him when Aloula sent a messenger to say that, if the Khedive approved, he would attack Walad, and refrain from ravaging the country. In this way he threatened one ruffian with another, and so was able to keep them on their best behaviour.

But he was unable to await the development of events in these regions. He was wanted at Khartoum, for the slavers were out, and were giving a great deal of trouble. He started at once, and taking the several stations on his way, he did at each his utmost to relieve the people's wants, and give justice as he went. The fact that he listened to everybody was noised abroad. It spread like wildfire, and there was such a rush of petitioners that he had to institute a box—a kind of post-office—for the memorials hurled in upon him. Nor did the toils of his march begin and end with these achievements in charity. There was the daily ride of thirty and forty miles; there were the chiefs, the pashas, the priests to receive; there were endless letters to write and innumerable details of practical kingship to attend to—all without help of any sort. Now and then he complained of fatigue; now and then he regretted his destiny. 'Sometimes I wish I had never gone into this sort of Bedouin life,' he says, 'either in China or here. Is it my fault or my failing

that I never have a respectable assistant with me to bear part of my labours? The men who would suit me are all more or less burdened with their families, etc.; those who are not so loaded are for money or for great acts which do not accord with my views.'

At a station on the route to Kasala, a number of his camel-drivers were set upon and killed by the Barias, a wild tribe from the region between Khartoum and the marches of Abyssinia. Of course he himself escaped; but such was the uncertainty of life in these parts that in a letter home he wrote as follows:

'I have written to say that if anything happens to me the Khedive is to be defended from all blame, and the accident is not to be put down to the suppression of slavery. I have to contend with many vested interests, with fanaticism, with the abolition of hundreds of Arnauts, Turks, etc., now acting as Bashi-Bazouks, with inefficient governors, with wild independent tribes of Bedouins, and with a large semi-independent province lately under Sebehr, the Black Pasha, at Bahr Gazelle.'

At last he arrived at Khartoum, and the ceremony of installation took place on the 5th of May. The firman and an address were read by the Cadi, and a royal salute was fired. Gordon was expected to make a speech, but all he said was, With the help of God I will hold the balance level.' This delighted the people more than if he had talked for an hour. In an account of

his installation by an eye-witness, it is stated that 'the Pasha afterwards directed gratuities to be distributed among the deserving poor;' and that in three days, he gave away upwards of a thousand pounds of his own money.

To his disgust he had to live in a palace as large as Marlborough House. Some two hundred servants and orderlies were in attendance; they added to his discomfort by obliging him to live according to the niceties of an inflexible code of etiquette. He was sternly forbidden to rise to receive a guest, or to offer a chair; if he rose, everyone else did the same; he 'was guarded like an ingot of gold.' This formality was detestable to him; but he made a good deal of fun of it, and more than once, while certain solemnities were proceeding, he would delight the great chiefs, his visitors, by remarking in English (of which they knew nothing), 'Now, old bird, it is time for you to go.'

His elevation had awakened a great deal of ill-feeling among the officials, and especially among the relations of Ismail Yacoub. Indeed, it is told of the ex-Governor's sister that on hearing of Gordon's appointment she expressed her opinion of the transaction by breaking some hundred and thirty of the palace windows, and by cutting all the divans to pieces. The second in command, too, Halid Pasha, was hostile from the first, and

even tried to get the upper hand. Need it be said that he failed miserably? He began with impudence and swagger, but he soon submitted and promised amendment. Ten days after he broke out again. His insubordination was telegraphed to Cairo, and he was instantly cashiered and sent about his business.

On his ride from Massawa to Khartoum the 'Little Khedive,' had relieved the wants of so many of his people, and had effected so much good, notwithstanding his abolition of the whip (a mighty influence under his predecessor), that, as soon as he arrived in his capital, great crowds of petitioners besieged him in his palace in the hope of getting a hearing. It was impossible to see them all; so, as on the march, a box was instituted, and every case was carefully noted and considered. Before, it had been impossible to approach the Governor-General except by bribing his underlings. As much as £600 was commonly paid down for appointments not worth more than £200 a year. Gordon soon knew all this, and a great deal besides; but he felt the uselessness of attempting the reform of a system which had grown into a usage. He therefore punished no one for these rascalities; he took the money, and put it in the Khedive's treasury.

A very serious problem had presented itself at Khartoum. During his long rides from place to place, between Keren and the seat of government, he had

pondered deeply on the suppression of slavery in the vast regions he ruled. He had looked back on the consequences of the abolition of colonial slavery in years gone by, and in his rapid way had touched the heart of the matter at once. In the one case it was a matter affecting the Colonies only; in the other, it was a question of home interests affecting all sorts and conditions of men. Still, he took a cheerful view of the difficulties of his task. He went so far, indeed, as to hope that he had solved the problem, and laid the details of his scheme before her Majesty's Consul-General, Mr. Vivian.

The work he had begun and was bent on finishing was fraught with peculiar perils. It demanded a tact, an energy, and a force of will almost superhuman. He had to deal not only with worthless and often mutinous governors of provinces, but with wild and desperate tribesmen as well; he had to disband 6,000 Bashi-Bazouks, who were used as frontier guards, but who winked at slave-hunting and robbed the tribes on their own account; he had to subdue and bring to order and rule the vast province of the Bahr Gazelle, but now beneath the sway of the great slaver Sebehr. It was a stupendous task: to give peace to a country quick with war; to suppress slavery among a people to whom the trade in human flesh was life and honour and fortune; to make an army out of perhaps the worst

material ever seen; to grow a flourishing trade and a fair revenue in the wildest anarchy in the world. The immensity of the undertaking; the infinity of details involved in a single step towards the end; the countless odds to be faced; the many pests — the deadly climate, the horrible vermin, the ghastly itch, the nightly and daily alternation of overpowering heat and bitter cold—to be endured and overcome; the environment of bestial savagery and ruthless fanaticism —all these combine to make the achievement unique in human history. As it seems to me, the two words placed at the head of this chapter so far symbolize the whole position. Like the adventurer in Browning's magnificent allegory, my hero was face to face with a vast and mighty wrong; he had everything against him, and he was utterly alone; but he stood for God and the right, and he would not blench. There stood the Tower of Evil—the grim ruined land, the awful presences, the hopeless task, the anarchy of wickedness and despair and wrath. He knew, he felt, he recognised it all; and yet—

> 'And yet
> Dauntless the stag-horn to my lips I set
> And blew: *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came.*'

He had got through a great mass of work at Khartoum, as we have seen. One of his reforms was a public boon. Many of the houses lay far inland,

and the labour of supplying them with water from the river was immense. Gordon came; and thenceforth the river-water could be pumped up into the town, and this at but a moderate cost. In the course of this reform he had some trouble with the Catholic missionaries; they persisted in giving asylum to runaway slaves, and when he remonstrated with them they behaved with surpassing arrogance. Finding that they would not listen to him and reason, he at once wrote off to the Pope, requesting him to restrain his servants from interfering in the Khedive's administration. Then he told the missionaries what he had done, and though they were wroth in the extreme, they offended no more.

His presence was all-important at Khartoum; but at Darfour it was more important still. The country was in revolt, and the Khedive's garrisons at Fascher, Dara, and Kolkol, were besieged by the rebels in their several barracks. A rescue had been sent to Fascher in March; but no news of it had yet arrived. Gordon therefore determined to march at once to its relief. About the middle of May he set off on camel-back for what turned out to be a five months' ride. On the road to Obeid, the capital of Kordofan, in company with the Governor-General's ordinary retinue, of 200 cavaliers, he wrote home thus: 'I am quite comfortable on the camel, and am happier

when on the march than in towns with all the ceremonies. The route here is over a plain and bushes quite uninteresting.' His camel was an exceedingly fine one, and astonished the escort by the pace at which it carried him along. Gordon knew that it does not do to curb your camel, so he let it go as it would. Not far from Obeid this system almost proved fatal to an urchin who got in his way. 'I nearly acted as Juggernaut to a little black naked boy to-day,' he says; 'my camel had shaken the nose-ring out of its nose, and ran off with me. I could not stop it, and of course the little black ran right under the camel, who, however, did not tread on him, though it was a miracle he escaped being killed. Nothing is so perverse as a camel; when it runs away it will go anywhere.'

On the frontier of Darfour he hoped to make friends of the rebel tribes between Fogia and Fascher, and to march on the latter city with a body-guard of subdued and converted enemies. Such superb self-confidence is habitual to him. It is an outcome of that profound religiousness which is an integral part of his character and his life. The Cross's true soldier, a mystic and a leader of men, he fights and conquers much as Columbus voyaged and as Cromwell ruled. 'Praying for the people ahead of me whom I am about to visit,' he says, 'gives me much strength; and it is wonderful *how something seems already to have*

passed between us when I meet a chief (for whom I have prayed) for the first time. On this I base my hopes of a triumphant march to Fascher. I have really no troops with me, but I have the Shekinah, and I do like trusting to Him and not to men. Remember, unless He gave me the confidence and encouraged me to trust Him, I could not have it; and so I consider that I have the earnest of success in this confidence.'

And so, in an aureole of faith, he pushed across the desert. One day his camel bore him far in advance of his train. He had put on his marshal's uniform, and, leaving his men miles behind, he rode into the station of Fogia, an Arab chief his only following: the Governor was dumbfoundered by his approach. Hardly had he arrived ere there came in a telegram from Cairo asking him for £32,000! It is not surprising that he should have written home in such terms as these: 'I have certainly got into a slough with the Soudan, but looking at my Banker, my Commandant-in-Chief and my Administrator, it will be wonderful if I do not get out of it. If I had not got this Almighty Power to back me in His infinite wisdom, I do not know how I could even think of what is to be done.'

He could not march at once upon Fascher; he could get no farther than Oomchanga, five or six days off. Here he had to await the arrival of the two or three hundred ragamuffins he called his army; here he

halted for a whole fortnight. With his ever-active mind, and the consciousness of the worlds of work awaiting him elsewhere, this forced inaction proved almost insupportable. He had suffered too keenly in the past to derive any comfort from retrospection; but he could always—and he always did—find the consolation his soul so much desired. 'It is lamentable work,' he writes, 'and over and over again, in the fearful heat, I wish I was in the other world. When I look back on the hours and hours of waiting for this and that, during China and later campaigns, and here, I really think few men have had such worries in this way. But I am wrong in it; the lot is cast evenly to us all. We are servants; sometimes our Master gives us work, and at others He does not, and our feelings in both circumstances should be the same. All I can say is, that this inaction, with so much to do elsewhere, is very trying indeed to my body. It is such a country, so worthless, and I see nothing to be gained by its occupation.'

His feelings took a more cheerful turn as soon as the Darfourians, who had been horribly maltreated by the Bashi-Bazouks, came flocking in to lay their troubles before him, and to ask his pardon. Great must have been their wonder when the Governor-General told them that it was rather for him to ask pardon of them. Again, it was a joy to him to find that his trust in a

bloodless victory had not been vain. He made peace with all the tribesmen round him, and as far as half-way to Fascher. At last, however, his 'nondescripts,' as he called the Egyptian military, came in; and on June 30th, with 500 men, he left Oomchanga for Toashia. There he meant to pick up another 350, and, vacating that station, to move on to Dara, increase his force by the 1,200 there in garrison, and march on to Fascher with an army 2,000 strong. By the way he proposed to still further relieve and help his new subjects by breaking up the robbers' dens that honeycombed the country, and making examples of the gentry who harboured in them. At Shaka—'the Cave of Adullam, all robbers and murderers'—was housed the horde of Sebehr Pasha, the great slave-dealer, under the command of his son Suleiman. He could put 11,000 men into the field—'a huge army for these parts;' and Gordon, conscious of the incapacity of his 'nondescripts,' had been planning his subjugation without the firing of a shot. 'I feel no excitement about my operations,' he says; 'I hope they will go well, and that there will be no fighting.' Fighting there was, this hope notwithstanding; but his armed victories were as nothing to the victories of his genius and his soul.

When Gordon reached Toashia, he found his 350 in a state of semi-starvation. He was told that they had

received no pay for three years; and his thoughts must have travelled back to China, and the legion of rowdies and the empty chest with which he had broken the empire of the Heavenly King. As we follow his career, it seems as though it were his destiny to do great deeds with nothing; the cane with which he won his early victories has been from first to last a symbol of his means. Such a miserable set were this garrison of Toashia that he determined not to take them with him, but to send them to Kordofan to be disbanded. This he did in the hope of making friends with a certain chief (whose brother he had released), and of getting men from him. It had been arranged that the potentate in question should join him at Toashia, and go on with him to Dara. But Toashia was admirably unhealthy, and he had no choice but to begin his march at once, and trust to picking up his ally on the route. He had with him no more than 500 men (350 of them in little better case than the scarecrows he was disbanding), all armed with flint-locks or worse, and with but a single field-piece among them. At the rendezvous no chief was visible, and the wretched army was threatened by thousands of 'determined blacks,' who knew that the Governor-General was with it. 'I prayed heartily for an issue,' he says, '*but it gave me a pain in the heart like that I had when surrounded at Masindi.* I do not fear death, but I fear, from want of faith, the result of my

death, for the whole country would have risen. It is, indeed, most painful to be in such a position; it takes a year's work out of me.' And again, in another strain, he says, 'You do not know how unpalatable these positions are to my pride. If I had my way, I would have ridden through with 100 horsemen and not feared; it is the grander state, one has to go on. With *that* gun which nothing would induce my black secretary to abandon, I made him give up 200 rounds.'

Matters were made worse by the fact that the contingent from Dara marched by a different route, and so missed the main body. Fortunately no attack was made, for had the tribesmen chosen to fall upon Gordon and his miserable following there can be no doubt that they would have been slaughtered to a man. Gordon himself was completely at their mercy. 'When I had got through my dangers,' he says, 'I saw some deer, and took my rifle. Of course, he' (the bearer) 'had thrown it down and broken the stock. Thus, had I been attacked, I should have been defenceless.'

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ROBBERS' DEN.

When the Governor-General, on the 12th of July, rode into Dara, the people were astonished to see him. 'They had been six months without news from without,' he says; 'it was like the relief of Lucknow.' Haroun, the pretender to the throne of Darfour, had been stirring up revolt and threatening the garrison; many of the tribes were hostile; and Suleiman, the son of Sebehr, with 6,000 armed slaves at his back, finding that Gordon would not side with him, was, plotting his murder. Many were the suggestions as to the course he should pursue. One, which emanated from his black secretary, showed how Suleiman should be lured to Dara, taken prisoner, and stabbed or shot to death if he resisted. Gordon felt this inspiration to be a trifle too Asiatic. Of the others he took no heed. What he did was to despatch an expedition, numbering 8,000 natives and 1,500 troops, under his lieutenant, Hassan, against the self-crowned Sultan, and to set a price upon his head.

The position was exceedingly delicate; the more so as there were other matters of as pressing import as this of Haroun, which demanded all his energy and skill.

He was ringed about with perils. On the one hand was Haroun; on the other were the hostile tribes, who had taken the field against his men; in front of him was Suleiman, the most desperate foeman of all. His proposed solution of the problem is almost startling: he would strike first at Suleiman, and quell him, not with arms, but with friendship and trust. 'The happy thought struck me,' he says, 'of making Sebehr's son Governor of Dara, thus cutting him off from intrigue with Shaka. I separate him from the Cave of Adullam and prevent his making any more slave-raids. He will find occupation for his armed slaves in keeping the tribes in order around him.' The plan was so beset with difficulties as to be impracticable; and another soon took its place. This, however, was in the same direction: Suleiman was to be subdued, not by the sword, but by the spirit. Before Gordon could set about its execution, however, he had to confer with one of Sebehr's chiefs, a man named El Nour, whom he knew to be faithful to the Government, and who could bring him tidings of what was going on in the robbers' dens. Then, to move to the relief of Fascher, with Dara undefended, and Haroun at large, was out of the question; for that

rebel might at any moment swoop down on Dara. Gordon's new plan, therefore, was to appoint El Nour his Governor. From this eminence the Arab might corrupt the ruffians in Shaka, weaken the famous slaver's position, and defend his charge from Haroun's attacks, while his new commander marched to the relief of Fascher.

Unfortunately El Nour was out raiding, in company with two other chiefs, Awad and Edrees, both faithful to the Government, but all three suspected and watched by Suleiman, so that they could only write to Gordon by stealth, and lie in wait for an opportunity to visit him in person. Their loyalty was Gordon's own work. When at Massawa, he speculated on the chance that they might be on bad terms with Sebehr, and got them promoted to be Lieutenant-Colonels. 'Sebehr's son,' he says, 'accuses them of being in correspondence with me; at any rate, the yeast has worked among them.' The slave-dealer was right to be suspicious; for Gordon knew a good deal of what was going on. He knew, for instance, that Suleiman was constantly in receipt of letters from Sebehr, all containing the mysterious sentence, 'Take care of Abdoul Razoul.' He knew that Suleiman had a great quantity of ivory, which, being Government monopoly, he was determined to have. He knew, too, that the slavers used to say that 'he wanted to get the

hippopotamus with its skin;' but what this meant he had not thought it worth while to discover.

Presently he learned from El Nour and Edrees, both of whom had ransomed themselves from Shaka for £600 apiece, that it was impossible for Suleiman to leave his den till the rains were over—that is, for three months. Meantime, the chief of the Razagats, a powerful tribe, pillaged and maltreated by the slavers, had fled, with 600 riders, to Dara, and was ready to side with Gordon in a raid upon Shaka. This was a gain in one sense, but a loss in another, for so naked and ruinous was the country-side that Gordon had barely food enough for his own men. And worse was behind. Not only did the whole tribe threaten to take shelter in the fort; many others, hearing of their resolves, began to move towards Dara with the same intent. The Razagats alone were able to put over 7,000 horsemen in the field;—they move with extraordinary swiftness, for they carry no baggage and ride without stirrups—and it was a matter of surprise to Gordon that, with such an army, they did not oppress their oppressors.

Another event, which made Gordon feel the utter helplessness of his position, happened about this time. An expedition for the re-capture of slaves brought in some 210 of them. They were starving, and when they looked up at him their faces were wistful for

food. He had little to give them, though. They had been thirty-six hours unfed, and the sight of their misery brought tears to his eyes. He sent them some corn. 'What could I do?' he says, 'I could only address the Arabs with me, and tell them that if they took Mussulmans as slaves they did it against the command of the Koran; and I took sand and washed my hands, in order that they might see I put on them the responsibility of the decision.' He was fast finding his suspicions confirmed, and that difficult as it was to crush the slavers, to deal with the slaves was more difficult still.

At last the troops returned whom he had sent out against the tribes, and with their return came the means of action. He had projected an attack on Suleiman's advanced guard (400 in number), with the intention of cutting it off from Shaka. But he found to his disgust that in the expedition his soldiers had done nothing themselves, but had allowed their allies, the friendly tribe, to do all the fighting for them; the fact being, as he learned later on, that their commander had taken a heavy bribe from the opposing chief. There had been great delay; no ground had been won; and the Leopard tribes were out, and were threatening Toashia. He therefore abandoned the attack on Suleiman for the relief of his own stronghold. With his 'nondescripts' and a con-

tingent of Masharins, a friendly tribe, he marched straight for the camp of the Leopards. They were caught in a terrific storm, and had to come to halt for the night in a waving deluge of rain, which, says Gordon, took some 50 per cent. of strength out of them. 'I put on my coat,' he writes, 'put up my umbrella, and wished for dawn. It was not pleasant, but I had my blanket, and rolled myself up in it, and slept well.' The next day they marched to the field of battle. The Masharins were so eager for the fray that, without waiting for the 'nondescripts,' they fell upon the Leopards and routed them with great slaughter. Of course the 'nondescripts' had lagged on the march. When they came up, the whole army encamped at the Leopards' headquarters (where they had, as prisoner, the chief's brother) and a council of war was held; in the middle of it the Leopards, in two divisions, each 350 strong, came boldly up and prepared to fall on. The Masharins went out to meet them; but in their teeth, and under a steady fire of musketry, they moved up valiantly to Gordon's very camp. Here, however, after a severe struggle, they were beaten back with loss, not of course by the Government troops, who took shelter behind the stockades, but by the bold Masharins, whose chief, Ahmed Neurva, was mortally wounded. Gordon's disgust at the conduct of his troops on this occasion knew no bounds. 'No

one can conceive what my officers and troops are!' he says. 'I will say no more than that for my own personal safety I must get 200 men as a body-guard. I do not think one of the enemy was killed at the assault of the station. Not one ought to have escaped. I was *sickened* to see twenty brave men in alliance with me ride out to meet the Leopard tribe unsupported by my men, who crowded into the stockade! It was terribly painful. The only thing which restrained me from riding out to the attack was the sheep-like state in which my people would have been had I been killed. What also would have become of the province?'

After a two days' campaign the Leopards were cut off from three of their watering-places. Only one being left them, and that in constant danger, they began crowding in with their submission; for without the means of satisfying their thirst, they had nothing to look forward to but death from drouth or in battle with the tribes into whose territory they might venture in search of water. The heat was terrific; the plight of the penitent Leopards, 'with throats unslaked, with black lips baked,' was piteous in the extreme. Gordon took pity on their misery, received their homage, (sworn on the Koran) and let them go down and drink. Then, the tribesmen having begun to take the law into their own hands, the Governor-General had to give way to the justiciar. One man had speared one

of another tribe through the arm; another had shot his comrade dead. Gordon settled the first difficulty by giving the wounded man £6; the second, by sentencing the assassin to be shot.

'My soul revolts at these horrors, of which I used to think nothing,' says Gordon. 'All these troubles come in quarrels for plunder—some miserable grain or an earthenware pot. . . . I have just disposed of the man who shot the other, who I am sorry to say died. I called the chiefs of the tribe to whom the dead man belonged, and the prisoner; and I asked the chiefs whether they would prefer me to shoot the murderer, or to give him to them to serve as an assistant to the family of the dead man. The latter course they acceded to, I am glad to say. The murderer was the slave (I have let out the word) of one of the soldiers before; so I have only changed his master. You should have seen the fright of everyone around me—even the chiefs of the tribe of the murdered man—as I took the rifle and cocked it, with the pretence of shooting the poor black, ivory-teethed murderer. I need not say I felt quite sure that the tribe would not wish it. In all natures, however savage, there is good; but nevertheless, everyone around me thought I would shoot him if they did not intercede. I said, "Shall I shoot him now, and leave him a stinking carcase? or will you take him, and make him work for the family he has bereaved?"

'It is a question of cows, nothing else, with my allies; and one of the greatest trouble is the division of spoil. Like David at Ziklag with his men, and Mahomet with his men at Mecca, and us with our men in India. Every general wishes there was no plunder;

it is a source of weakness. If my expedition is successful, we shall be bothered with thousands of cows and sheep, and thus open to attack. In China, I never could move for days after a victory. I have received a very strong letter from the Khedive, pressing me to put an immediate stop to the slave-raids; and also one from Cherif Pasha, both very kind, but strong in words—that I am not to hesitate at any act that I think fit to put a stop to it. I have asked the Khedive to publish them. This determines me more and more to destroy the nest at Shaka. I hear some of Sebehr's people are coming up to join me; if so, I shall try and disarm them. What a complex question this is! I wish it was unravelled; for the tension on me now for six months has been great, and I have not finished the half of my troubles. There are besides this and Shaka, Galabat, Abyssinia, and Aboubekker, Pasha of Zeila, who is semi-independent. You will easily see that to attempt a wholesale clearance of all these obstacles by orders, without means of carrying them out, would be foolish. The retail clearance is the only one possible to succeed, and the retail business requires me to see to it; for, owing to the Government being an absolute one, it is difficult to find people to carry out an obnoxious order, for the fear that the Government may not support them.'

The Leopards were soon in trouble again. They stole a number of slaves from Gordon's allies; and, on the 12th August, an expeditionary force was sent out against them. A thousand cows were lifted, and a large number of the enemy were disarmed. But the injured parties demanded the stolen slaves from Gordon's

people, and some curious scenes were the result of affairs. Gordon, finding it necessary to follow up the force, started next day for Duggam. Owing to the badness of the water, he was obliged to move on to Kario. Here he learned that Haroun was backing the rebels, had sent forty horsemen to reinforce them at Gebel Heres, and, on his own account, was ravaging the country to the north. Joining the force, he found the usual amount of work awaiting him. His subordinates, indeed, were perfectly incompetent. Thus he had ordered the Major Commanding to look after the sick; but he had himself, on the way to Fascher, to find transport for such as could not follow on foot. 'This sort of thing,' he says, 'wears me; for it is really not my duty to see to such details. In fact, I may say it is not my duty to be commanding an expedition like this; but there is no help for it.' Again, on the 15th August, he writes: 'All the morning I had nothing but slave-questions to settle; some of the most troublesome kind. I wish that the Anti-Slavery Society were here, so that I could put it on them to decide. I had nearly a row to-day about it with the soldiers, and only hope things will go no worse.'

And, while he was bewailing his army, the army, on their part, were plotting for his life. After a thirty miles' ride through bog and sand, he entered Fascher, with 150 men, to the extreme surprise of its

beleaguered inhabitants. Near the place where his camp was pitched, a muezzin was in the habit of calling to prayers. The Arab Lieutenant-Colonel, and some of the men, in the hope of rousing the people, ordered him to desist from his task, inasmuch as he disturbed the Governor-General. By a fortunate chance, Gordon's secretary missed the sound; and, making inquiries, discovered the culprit. 'I gave the crier £2,' says Gordon; 'and I bundled off my friend the Lieutenant-Colonel into banishment at Katarif, where he will have time to meditate. I never hesitate a moment in coming down on such fellows. The man now cries with double energy, even as I write this.'

We are now approaching a crisis in affairs which Gordon (who seems to have read his 'Midshipman Easy') has called 'a triangular duel,' though he might with better reason have called it a quadrilateral. It needed all his energy and all his indomitable will to keep him master of the situation. On the one hand, as I have said, his presence in the field against Haroun was urgent; on the other, many of the tribes were hostile and threatening; while, worse than all, Suleiman with his 6,000 robbers had sat down before Dara, and was ravaging the country round, and even menacing the city itself. This was the position. Let us see how Gordon dealt with it, and faced the tremendous odds in his disfavour.

Of these three enemies the least important was probably the would-be Sultan. Could Gordon have met, as he longed to do, the pretender in the field, the result, as he felt, was not doubtful, notwithstanding the utter want of discipline among the 'nondescripts.' But this in the then state of affairs was impossible. To make matters worse for him, his Lieutenant, Hassan, with 5,000 muskets, still lingered on the road, afraid to march to the attack without his chief.

Then for the tribes. Many were hostile, and those in other districts were doing their best to confederate with and to come to the aid of those he had recently subdued. His energy therefore was constantly being frittered away on expeditions against the new enemy, the capture of prisoners, and the lifting of cows. The amount of work this petty warfare involved was enough to prevent him from entertaining the idea of assaults on either Haroun or Suleiman. To add to the confusion, his secretary fell ill, and all the tiresome details of business had, of necessity, to pass through his own hands; while interviews were asked of him—and obtained—on pretexts the most trivial, and for interests the most wretched and sporadic imaginable. 'For the very smallest thing men come direct to me,' he writes, 'and force their way in, let me be as engaged as possible. There is no chain of responsibility, everyone thinks he has a perfect right to come to me, and also

thinks himself aggrieved if I do not give him an immediate hearing. Besides this, in giving or taking a paper to you they take two or three minutes. You never saw such a dilatory set! The consequence is that papers are snatched out of their hands, and also thrown at them. All very undignified; but I cannot help it. If you send for a man he takes a nice funeral pace to come to you. You see him afar off long before he arrives, and sometimes I am so undignified as to rush to meet him. All this is not good, for my post is a very high one; but I cannot help it, and I do not care. I have the power if I have not the glory, and, at any rate, I get through a mint of work.'

The third enemy—the strongest and most desperate of all—was Suleiman. This daring scoundrel was harrying and pillaging the tribes all round, while they, on their part, were crying out for help. Suleiman all the time was tendering his services to Gordon against Haroun, but the offer was rightly interpreted into a pretext for opportunities of professional work. What was really going on in the robbers' den Gordon in no way suspected. Two years later it turned out that Suleiman's desperadoes were plotting to catch and kill him. It would have been an easy matter enough, as he had no sentries.

When Sebehr was in the fulness of his power, he gathered his chiefs together under a tree on the road be-

tween Obeid and Shaka. Here he made them swear to obey him. Later on, when he went to Cairo to spend £100,000 in bribing the Khedive's ministers, and was held a prisoner, he met Gordon, and solicited his aid. Of course the request was refused. He sent at once this message to Darfour: 'Obey the orders given under the tree;' which was another way of saying, 'To arms, and to the road!' On Gordon's arrival at Khartoum, as we have seen, these orders were obeyed, and whole provinces became one anarchy. Nor was this all. When Gordon lay at Fascher, Sebehr's lieutenants met and swore upon the Koran to attack the Government, while El Nour, the slaver, with whom he had dealt in secret, had fallen away from his allegiance, and was numbered with the enemy: it was 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came,' and with a vengeance.

And there were matters which, if of less import, were none the less wearing and trying. They taxed his patience to the utmost, and his temper too; and we find him now in the highest spirits, now longing with all his heart for the blessing of death. He began to fear, for instance, that the delays of Hassan and his 5,000 in the campaign against Haroun were of a piece with that other abortive affair against the tribes; and having these suspicions, he felt it to be his first duty to deal with Haroun. Hardly, however, was he ready to take the field, ere it turned out that Haroun had retired.

So much energy had been wasted; so much energy was gone. He had to face in another direction, and begin his work of preparation and enterprise and combination all anew.

His movements at this juncture were so rapid and so many, that it is impossible to give more than a mere sketch of them. They were confined for the most part to the immediate neighbourhood of Kario and Fufar; to clearing the road at one point; to despatching expeditions against hostile tribes at another; to searching for grain, of which there was a great scarcity; to capturing spies; and to vainly essaying to control the Bashi-Bazouks, whom he had learned to hate as cordially as he loved the oppressed blacks, for whom he would have given his life. In the midst of these vain efforts and vexations of spirit he is tormented by scorpions; or he is beset by storms so furious, that his tent is torn down in the dead of night, and he is left shelterless and drenched to the skin. 'I do not suppose you could find a more useless set of servants than I have,' he says; 'the Maltese, on occasions like this, is completely paralyzed, and sits down, leaving everything to its fate —a regular tumble-down sort of fellow. I have been in a towering rage with him. They were cowering under their blown-down tent, not making an effort to put things straight. It is one comfort to be utterly uncomfortable, for it cannot be worse, and *may* be better.'

At this point the measure of his troubles seems full. But this was by no means the case. News came in which made all other troubles trivial. It roused his spirit to its highest, and led to such a victory as could never have been won by arms alone. Suleiman, with his frightful six thousand, was on the eve of attacking the Government at Dara. Gordon lost not a moment. Ignoring alike his 'nondescripts' and his allies, he mounted his camel, and rode to Dara unarmed and virtually alone. Of this tremendous ride, one of the most striking achievements in his career, I cannot do better than let him tell the story himself. This he did in a letter (dated September 2nd) to his sister: like all he wrote, it is the more remarkable in that it was never intended for publication:

'I got to Dara about 4 p.m., long before my escort, having ridden eighty-five miles in a day and a half. About seven miles from Dara I got into a swarm of flies, and they annoyed me and my camel so much, that we jolted along as fast as we could. Upwards of 300 were on the camel's head, and I was covered with them. I suppose that the queen fly was among them. If I had no escort of men, I had a large escort of these flies. I came on my people like a thunderbolt. As soon as they had recovered, the salute was fired. My poor escort! where is it? Imagine to yourself a single, dirty, red-faced man on a camel, ornamented with flies, arriving in the divan all of a sudden. The people were paralyzed, and could not believe their eyes. No dinner after my long ride, but a quiet night, forgetting my

miseries. At dawn I got up, and putting on the golden armour the Khedive gave me, went out to see my troops, and then mounted my horse, and with an escort of *my* robbers of Bashi-Bazouks, rode out to the camp of the other robbers three miles off. I was met by the son of Sebehr—a nice-looking lad of twenty-two years—and rode through the robber-bands. There were about 3,000 of them—men and boys. I rode to the tent in the camp; the whole body of chiefs were dumb-foundered at my coming among them. After a glass of water, I went back, telling the son of Sebehr to come with his family to my divan. They all came, and sitting there in a circle, I gave them in choice Arabic my ideas: That they meditated revolt; that I knew it, and that they should now have my ultimatum, viz.: that I would disarm them and break them up. They listened in silence, and then went off to consider what I had said. They have just now sent in a letter stating their submission, and I thank God for it. They have pillaged the country all round, and I cannot help it. I feel very sorry for the poor people, for they were my allies at Wadar, and through their absence with me, their possessions were exposed to the attacks of these scoundrels. What misery! But the Higher than the Highest regardeth it, and can help them. I cannot. The sort of stupefied way in which they heard me go to the point about their doings, the pantomime of signs, the bad Arabic, etc., was quite absurd. Fancy, the son of Sebehr only three days ago took his pistol and fired three shots close to my cavass, because the poor fellow, who was ill, did not get up when he came to him. . . . You should have seen his face, when I told him all this, when he protested his fidelity. However, I said it was all forgiven. Maduppa Bey has come here, and says, when the son of Sebehr got home, he laid down and

said not a word, and that the Arabs say *I have poisoned* him! with coffee.'

After delivering himself of his feelings to Suleiman and his horde, Gordon resolved to make a clean sweep of the den at Shaka. With this view he sent a body of men to take possession. Meantime, there was division in the slavers' camp, one party being still in favour of war, the other in favour of peace. Suleiman, the 'Cub,' as Gordon called him, was in a towering passion at his own surrender. He was unable to hide his feelings from the Governor-General; and it was evident that had it been in his power to persuade the chiefs to revolt against the Government, he would have gladly done so. They, however, kept sending in their submissions with great punctuality, thus rendering resistance less and less possible, till at last he himself was obliged to obey Gordon's order to proceed to Shaka. Before his departure he requested the Governor-General to give him robes in accordance with custom, and as a sign that the Governor-General was satisfied. To this Gordon replied: 'I have no robes; you have not filled me with over-much confidence in your fidelity, and you have been very rude to me, while I have shown you every attention, and have gone out of my way to be civil to you—a mere boy—have done my best for you, and tried to protect you.' At this the young slaver was furious; and Gordon and his 'garrison of sheep

soldiers' were for a time in the greatest peril, for had the slavers, who were brave men, all trained to war, unanimously agreed on an attack, they could at any moment have put the Governor-General and his handful to the sword. The crisis, however, like so many others in Gordon's career, was to end in victory. Suleiman left quietly for Shaka. From that place he despatched a letter in which he declared himself Gordon's son, and asked for a government. In reply, he was informed that until he either went to Cairo to salute the Khedive, or gave some other proof of fidelity, the Governor-General would never give him a place, even if the refusal cost him his life. After imparting this message to the chiefs who brought the letter, Gordon turned to one of them and asked him if he was a father. The man said 'Yes.' Whereupon Gordon said, 'Then do you not think a good flogging would do the "Cub" good?' And the chief agreed that it would.'

This manner of dealing with the slavers was certainly most efficacious. It is, however, abundantly apparent from Gordon's letters that he felt deeply for Suleiman. More than once he expresses a great pity for him, and a hope that the rebel will forgive him his hard treatment. That harshness was necessary (Bonaparte would have decimated the horde, and plumed himself upon his leniency) there cannot be a doubt. Only a

few days later Gordon writes: 'Suleiman no longer hopes to conquer, but wants to get away from my proximity. He may try to go up to the other stations inland, but I do not expect it will last long: a retreating commander is rarely in a good temper, and he will soon disgust his people.' While all this worry was going on, it came to Gordon's knowledge that his secretary, in whom he had placed the greatest confidence, had taken £3,000 backsheesh. He was at once sent to Khartoum, there to be tried; though Gordon was afraid he would be very severely punished. He was succeeded by Berzati Bey, a young Mussulman of high attainments, of whom Gordon afterwards said: 'He had the invaluable quality of telling me when he disagreed with me.'

Early in September the Governor-General was making his way, over a bad road and through a dense and thorny forest, to Shaka. He had not proceeded far when he received a letter from Suleiman inviting him to take up his abode in his house. Gordon accepted the invitation at once. As he neared the robbers' den Suleiman and his chiefs came out to meet him, and gave him a cordial welcome. The slaver was on his best behaviour. He treated Gordon with the greatest reverence; but he renewed his request for a government, and fawned at his sovereign's feet on every opportunity. The Governor-General, however,

was not to be thus cajoled. He reminded Suleiman that he had not yet earned his promotion; but he gave him his own gun, and taught him its use.

He only stayed two days in the robbers' den. Perhaps this was as well, for he was without sentries, and it turned out later that the slave-dealers had been plotting to make him prisoner. Why they did not must remain a wonder. The only explanation is that, as at Dara, he amazed and awed them by his utter indifference to danger. He left in the middle of September for Obeid, lest the humidity of Shaka should affect his servant's health; and he had a strong suspicion that a caravan of slaves were accompanying him—a suspicion soon verified by his discovery of some eighty men, women, and children in chains. He remonstrated with the slave-merchant; he was told that they were wives and offspring. They were too far from their homes to send back, and had Gordon released them they would have starved to death; so, at the risk of a probable scandal through the missionaries, he let the caravan alone, insisting only that the chains should be removed. Between Obeid and Shaka the camel-rides seem to have been specially fatiguing, but the journey was not without its diversions.

'To-day,' he writes, 'I had meant to leave my caravan and ride past to Obeid; but, as I went along, I heard reports of there being a lot of brigands on the

road, who were robbing everyone who passed. We came on a flock of cows belonging to these brigands, and I halted. The caravan came up to me, and I seized twenty-four of the Arabs who owned the cows, and who were said to be the robbers. I then determined not to hurry on: so I went quietly with six men to a watering-place near, while the caravan went by another road to the same watering-place. On my road we met two fugitives, who stated that their caravan, coming from Obeid to Shaka, had that moment been attacked near us. We pushed on, and the plunderers bolted; but we rescued five charged donkeys and captured the chief of the robbers with some twenty others. I judged the question of the chief, and have had him hanged (at least ordered it, having tossed up), and then of course when the man was begged off, I let him off. I declare it is necessary to make an example, but my heart shrinks from the killing of these poor brutes, who may have heard Sebehr's son was at war with me, and who thought they were doing me a service and themselves also in plundering those going and coming from the son of Sebehr. Of all painful decisions these are the worst, and I do not know where to turn in them. If there were courts of justice it would not be so bad; but there is none to speak of, and all would take a bias from my point of view. It was one of the slave-dealers' people who begged this man off! I like these slave-dealers; they are a brave lot, and putting aside their propensity to take slaves, are much finer people than those of Lower Egypt. They are far more enterprising.'

In the same letter he goes on to talk of an albino negress whom he had found at Shaka, and whom he

had intended to send to the Khedive. For some reason unexplained he seems, however, to have altered his mind; for he says, 'I shall give her to the convent at Obeid. I know of a male albino negro in Darfour; I shall try and marry the two. I shall make the convent people report on the result—whether it is white or black. She is not lovely, and looks very sickly, but is not so.'

Here is another specimen of his less serious experiences. 'Yesterday,' he writes, 'a black soldier came to me with a black girl he said belonged to him; but an Arab said he had bought her for £4. I disposed of the Arab owner by giving him £4, and said to the girl: "You belong to me—will you stay with me, or go with the black soldier?" "No," said she; "I will go with the black soldier." So off she went. This is all the marriage which takes place. I did not want the girl, as you may imagine.'

All the rest of the journey, he picked up slaves along the route. Many lay dying in the sun; some he bought, the others he sent down to a watering-place. The sight of their misery made him wretched. His letters teem with descriptions of their sufferings, and with proofs of his passionate desire to crush out the horrible traffic of which they were the staple. He knew that, except at the frontier, it was useless to attempt the work. Slavery was the custom of the

country, and there was no one to enforce his decrees against it. The ruin of Shaka, however, was a great stride towards the end desired; and, on his arrival at Obeid on October 3rd, and at Khartoum in the middle of the month, the effects of his daring and splendid achievement were perceptible among the people in more ways than one.

Indeed, his action with Suleiman and the robber den, with the extraordinary speed of his movements, had made him famous through all the length and breadth of the land. The people were amazed by his daring, his firmness, his irresistible energy. To tell a lazy functionary that if he did not get on with his work the Governor-General would be after him, was better than the whip itself. Everywhere the cry, 'The Pasha is coming,' became a signal for action. At such a pace did he traverse the continent he ruled, that his camels, which, under another rider, could have gone for ten days, gave in at the sixth. More than once, when the sun was at its fiercest, they dropped dead beneath him. When this happened, he took a new mount and rode on.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REVOLT OF THE SLAVE-DEALERS.

THE mass of work awaiting him at Khartoum, he got through in a week. Much of the time was taken up by petitions and petitioners; some by the trial and sentence of a murderer. 'I cannot go out,' he says, 'without having people howling after me with petitions that I will let their sons out of prison, or such like things; and they follow me wherever I go, yelling all the time. I will not let them be beaten away, as is usually the case; but I take no notice, for how can I release every prisoner?' 'Were it not,' he continues, 'for the very great comfort I have in communion, and the knowledge that He is Governor-General, I could not get on at all.'

His work despatched, he left Khartoum for Hellal, on a visit to Walad el Michael. The sail to Berber was the first real rest he had had since his first appearance in these lands, early in 1874. Thus he writes of

the voyage—with the only touch I have noted in him of anything that could possibly be mistaken for vanity:

'The quiet of to-day on board the steamer going down the Nile is quite delightful; a month later last year, I was coming down to you from the Lakes. What a deal has happened since then—with you, and me, and in Europe! I feel a great contentment. A star, when it makes its highest point, is said to have culminated; and I feel I have culminated—*i.e.*, I wish for a higher or other post than the one I have; and I know I cannot be removed unless it is God's will, so I rest on a rock, and can be content. Many would wish a culminating point with less wear and tear. But that very wear and tear makes me cling more to the place; and I thank God. He has made me succeed, not in any very glorious way, but in a substantial and lasting manner. *I entirely take that prophecy of Isaiah as my own, and work to it as far as I can.*'*

At Berber (October 24th), his first act was to make his clerk clear the ante-chamber of the eight or ten guards who, under the pretence of doing him honour, were keeping him under strict surveillance. Here he had again to endure three nights of illuminations and ceremonies. Of course he came in, too, for the usual accumulation of letters and telegrams from the various stations. It was everybody's theory of subject-

* 'And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt, for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and He shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.'

ship that, though there were governors on the spot, no one could attend to him but the Governor-General in person. In this way was he rewarded for the taking of Shaka.

On his way—as far as the river—to Dongola, his next resting-place, he was unlucky in his camels. They had been ill-fed, and they were weak and easily worn out; but the quiet, and the dry, dewless nights of the desert, after the storm and stress and the damp airs of Darfour, were soothing to his spirit, though he suffered tortures in the body from the 'courash'—a horrible eczema, which he describes as like the biting of a thousand mosquitoes. At Merowe, which is said to be the southernmost point reached by ancient Egyptian civilization, he was met by a shower of complaints, such a monster as a governor not having been seen in the neighbourhood for years. He stayed but three hours; but the people followed him out, and yelled their griefs at him for miles. Dongola was only twelve miles off; but a heavy gale obliged him to lay-to all day. The telegrams he received meanwhile were infinitely discomforting. On the one hand, Walad el Michael was threatening the fort at Senheit, and he had no troops; and, on the other, the Khedive was urging him to return to Cairo.

At Dongola, where he stayed till November 9th, he went into the question of the cost of a railway contract.

Then, as he was pushing on to Cairo, telegrams overtook him bringing the news of an Abyssinian invasion, and that 'Sennaar and Fazolie were threatened by Ras Arya (one of Johannis's generals).' He could hardly believe it possible. If it were true, there were few troops to resist the attack; and with not a soul at Khartoum on whom to depend, the risk of going on to Cairo was too great to be faced. He rode back to Dongola, and went on thence to Khartoum over the Bahouda desert, a five and a half days' ride. The way was long, cold, and tiring; and he reached Khartoum to find that the invasion was no invasion at all. It turned out later to be merely a food-raid of the Abyssinian marchmen, which had been heavily repulsed.

He remained at headquarters for three days. Then, having got through certain business, he mounted his camel and started once more on a visit to Walad el Michael, who was threatening to be troublesome. In Gordon's opinion the best thing to be done at this time would have been for King Johannis to pardon Walad, and translate him and his gang to the province of Hamaçem, which was his by inheritance; but to this it was more than doubtful that Johannis would agree. Walad was a standing danger to the Khedive's Government: he might attack it any day, or, by his raids on Abyssinian territory, he might set up a complication with Johannis. He was also a great expense; and this,

in the bad state of the finances, was a consideration of some importance. It would have been easy to dispose of him by giving him up to Johannis; but this would have dishonoured the Government, and so was out of the question.

On the way to Senheit, where Walad was quartered, Gordon met with no particular adventures. He had the usual trouble with his suite, but to this he was inured. His Arabs resented the swiftness of his march, and did everything in their power to hinder and delay. This, though, was of little avail, for he knew the country, and went on at his own speed, whether they would or no. Weary with his long journey, and wishing himself rather dead than alive, he would seek rest and shelter, not in the towns, but in the villages hard by; but the despicable scoundrels almost invariably went on to the towns themselves, and camped outside the gates, for the express purpose of proclaiming their master's approach, and of bringing down upon him the avalanch of petitions and complaints with which they knew he would be greeted. To baffle these tricks he used to rise at dawn, well knowing that the sentries, being Arabs, would be fast asleep, ride alone to a station two or three hours off, and there seek the rest of which he stood in such sore need. He had passed through Abou Haraz, Katarif, and Kasala, when, near the last of these places, he received a visit

from the Holy Man, Shereef Seid Hacim, whom once before he had met on his way to Khartoum, and who, as a descendant of Mahomet, had been greatly scandalized by his sitting in European fashion on his sacred divan. This time Seid unbent a little from his holiness, accepted £20, and begged of Gordon to take the turban and become a Mussulman. Many others had made the same request.

On his arrival at Walad's camp—to reach it, by-the-bye, he had to scale two mountains—he found the people a little odd in their manner. There were 7,000 of them, he tells us, all armed with muskets. They were drawn up to receive him; and, as on his previous visit, he was met by Walad's son and a number of priests. He at once demanded an interview with Walad, but the son replied that his father was ill. This the people of Senheit declared a lie. Gordon and his party were then lodged in some wretched huts, within a narrow pass outside the town, shut in by a fence ten feet high. At this the faces of his servants and his ten soldiers fell miserably; and he himself could not suppress a suspicion that he was 'in the lion's den.' 'I spoke to the interpreter,' he writes, 'and told him that if Michael wanted to make me prisoner he could do so; but that he would suffer in the end. It was a want of faith on my part to say this. However, he and Michael's son were so

profuse in their apologies that I feel sure that, as yet, I am not a prisoner. I excused myself to them for my remark by saying that if the news arrived at Senheit that I was boxed up, it would be taken for granted that I was a prisoner, and it would be telegraphed to his Highness at Cairo.'

Next day he had an interview with Walad. He advised the invalid to ask Johannis's pardon. The invalid replied that this was impossible, and took the opportunity to beg more territory, suggesting that if Gordon would only wink and look away, he would go up and take the Abyssinian town, Adowa. This, of course, was not to be thought of; and Gordon, disgusted with him and the Abyssinians generally, went on to Massawa. There he awaited the reply to a letter he had written to Ras Bariou, the Frontier-General. In this he had warned Johannis that he would be responsible for Walad no longer, and suggested that the brigand should be seized and sent to Cairo; while his troops should be given a free pardon, and the chance of getting clear away, inasmuch as if they were attacked, with Abyssinia shut to them, they would fight desperately.

No answer came. Johannis was campaigning against Menelek, King of Shoa; but, small as the country is, nobody knew where. Gordon waited on for some little time. Then, hearing nothing, he started

for Khartoum, by Suakim and Berber. He was, however, stopped on the road by a second telegram from the Khedive, bidding him to Cairo, to take part in the financial inquiry then being organized. The idea was distastful in the extreme. He fancied that his rough, nomadic life as Governor-General of the Soudan had unfitted him for the dinner-parties and entertainments of civilization. During his year of office he had ridden over nearly 4,000 miles of desert, without a bandage across the chest and round the waist. The consequence of this omission he sets forth in one of his letters. 'I have shaken,' he says, my heart or my lungs out of their places; and I have the same feeling in my chest as you have when you have a crick in the neck. . . . . I say sincerely that, though I prefer to be here sooner than anywhere, I would sooner be dead than live this life.'

But there was no help for it. The Khedive had spoken, and to hear was to obey. Steaming and sailing down stream, he reached Cairo in the first week in March. The Khedive had telegraphed him an invitation to dinner at eight o'clock; but the train was late, and on reaching the palace Gordon found that his host had waited an hour and a half for him, and that he insisted on his joining the party, begrimed with travel as he was. He was received with every mark of distinction. After the first greeting the Khedive asked

him to act as President of the Finance Inquiry; he was placed at His Highness's right hand; after dinner he was lodged in the Kasrel-Kousa, a palace of the Viceroy, which was set apart for royal visitors to Egypt. The splendour of the place and the attentions of courtiers and servants appear to have bored him terribly. 'My people are all dazed,' he says, 'and so am I, and wish for my camel.' To an English friend who called on him, he said: 'I feel like a fly in this big place.' Great things were expected of him; but the Khedive, in inviting him to become President of the Finance Inquiry, does not seem to have taken into account the fact that he was the last man to mould his views to those of other men. As on his previous sojourn at Cairo, he felt that he was being 'used;' and this, with his outspokenness, led to a rupture. He was confident, had the Khedive backed him more vigorously, of being able to settle the whole question out of hand.

His failure as a financial adviser, the loss of time his visit had entailed, the anarchy he ruled, the dismal and dreadful look-out ahead of him, had all tended to depress him deeply; and as he left the capital to return to the duties he had quitted so unwillingly, he could not suppress the desire within him that his final rest were near. He had chosen a new route, for his goal was Harrar, where he intended to turn out Raouf Pasha, who had been guilty of cruelty to the people.

In the letters he wrote on his way through Suez, Aden, Berberah, and Zeila, if he refers at all to the Cairo episode it is with visible reluctance; and the only memories which are touched with pleasure are those of a few of the many people he had met: M. de Lesseps, for instance, of whom he speaks with great kindness, and the Khedive's sons, whose manners impressed him very favourably indeed.

His short sojourn at Suez, Aden, and Berberah is marked by no incident of note. The air was full of the rumours of war, and he thought it by no means unlikely that he would be obliged to join his regiment: 'The pith is out of me for the moment,' he says; 'I go with only a half heart, for I would wish to be at Gallipoli. I know it was wrong in one way, but I cannot help it. It would be a great trouble for the Khedive, I know; but if God took me away He would not have any trouble in finding another worm to fill the place. You may imagine my feelings in going down to Aden to-morrow just at the crisis; it is truly *déchirant*.' At Aden Mr. Julian Baker (nephew of Sir Samuel Baker), who was on board the Admiral's flag-ship, the *Undaunted*, called on him, and they made the voyage together to Zeila. Before going on to Massawa, Gordon quitted Zeila for Harrar, where Raouf Pasha, was behaving like a 'regular tyrant.' Gordon, it will be remembered, had deposed this fellow, and sent him

down to Cairo from Gondokoro in 1874. The eight days' journey inland to Harrar he made on horseback. On his way he met £2,000 worth of coffee, which Raouf was packing off on his private account to Aden, intending to buy merchandise with the proceeds, and sell it at exorbitant prices to the soldiers at Harrar. Gordon confiscated the coffee off-hand; and before he reached Harrar he received a letter from Raouf, acknowledging his order of dismissal. He rode into Harrar on April 28th, and was met by the sight of several dying cows, which had been slaughtered in his honour; the scene made him miserable, inured as he was to the spectacle of suffering by his apprenticeship in China and the Soudan. Raouf, who looked downcast and penitent enough, left the place next day. 'I cannot help feeling sorry for him,' says Gordon. 'God grant I have not been unjust, but seeing the people, as they were, so fearfully cowed by him, made me feel that the sorrow of one man ought not to be weighed against the sorrows of many men.' Of Harrar, and his doings therein, he himself shall tell the story:

'Harrar dates from the seventh century. It appears that the Ameer Ahmed died very soon after the departure of Burton; that the citizens of Harrar made Khalifa Atra Ameer, but he was deposed after three days' reign by Mahomet, a native of the Ala tribe. He was the Ameer strangled (by Raouf). Khalifa Atra is still alive, and I hope to see him to-morrow. The Queen-dowager,

mother of Ameer Ahmed, paid me a visit this evening. Burton mentions her as Gershi Fatima. She is the grandmother of Yuseuf Ahmed, whom I have made Governor. She is a plucky old lady. I gave her £15 backsheesh. There are many here who remember Burton's visit. . . . I am living in the palace that Burton was received in; the Ameers lived in a small tower, not twenty feet square, of two stages, and surrounded by their harem. . . . I have just seen Khalifa Atra, who reigned for a few hours, and I told him it was better to be humble, and not high, than to be proud and elevated, for a fall has always to be feared; if one is near the ground one cannot fall very far.'

Gordon did not stay long at Harrar; he returned to Zeila, and reached that place at dawn on the 9th of May, 'after a terrible march of eight days.' Fagged as he was, he pushed on straight for Massawa. There, on the 12th of May, he met with an enthusiastic reception. But he was anxious to get back to Khartoum and his arrears of work; and on the 3rd of June we find him near Berber, having done the distance between Suakim and that place in nine days. At Atbara River the steamer met him for Khartoum. The heat was greater than even he had ever experienced; and he was in no humour for trifling with his subordinates. His first trouble at headquarters was the refusal of Osman Pasha, his second in command in the Soudan, to go to Darfour. He pleaded illness, but Gordon knew this

to be false. The truth was, that Osman, in the second-class of the Medjidie, which the Governor-General had asked for him at Cairo, had achieved his ideal, and wanted no more. Finding him in this lofty humour, and suspecting him of a tendency to treason, Gordon packed him off to the capital there and then, to be dealt with by the authorities. This, however, was a trifle in comparison with the rest. Everything was in arrears; there were mountains of papers to go through, crowds of people to see, swamps of peculation and wrong to be traversed; and all the while the Governor-General saw no chance of making ends meet, and entertained no hope of permanent good. The people were delighted to have him again among them, for they knew there would be no delays. But the state and ceremony by which he was surrounded was sore upon him, perhaps as sore as the thought of his unrequited labour.

His news from Abyssinia was that Walad had evacuated Egyptian territory, and had gone towards Adowa with an eye to business. Gordon's letters to King Johannis and Ras Bariou, discrediting his deeds, but stipulating that his life should be spared, had fallen, as he had foreseen they would, into the rebel's hands; and he was rather pleased than otherwise that Walad knew the Governor-General to entertain no personal wish to do him harm.

Soon, however—in July, 1878—the news came in that Suleiman had revolted, and had laid hands on the Bahr Gazelle. It was a critical time; for while the Governor-General had been keeping the slavers in check, breaking their communications with the northern provinces and blockading them in the south, they had gathered head under Suleiman and overrun the Gazelle. Gordon acted with his wonted swiftness and assurance. He despatched Romulus Gessi with an expeditionary force to the south, and seizing the persons of such of Suleiman's family as were within his reach, imprisoned them and confiscated their goods.

After a march for reinforcements into the Equatorial Province, Gessi returned down the river and landed his troops at Rabatchambé. It was not until August 26th, however, that he pushed on through a flooded country to Rumbek, a station on the Bahr-el-Kohl. Beyond him, to westward, the waters of all the tributaries of the Bahr Gazelle were out, and incessant rains delayed his advance until far on into November. In this inaction Gessi learned that Suleiman had proclaimed himself Lord of the Province, and had surprised the Khedive's garrison at Dem Idris, seized the stores, and massacred the troops. This success decided the neutral Arab tribes, and Suleiman was strongly reinforced from them. It was even rumoured that with 6,000 men he contemplated an attack on

Rumbek. Gessi had but 300 regular troops, two guns, and 700 ill-equipped and ill-drilled irregulars. He entrenched himself, and sent to Gordon for aid; but owing to the blockade of the river by the 'Sudd' his letters took five months to reach Khartoum. In the meanwhile he got no help from the officials, whether civil or military, and his soldiers began to desert. Desertion he checked by a right use of the lash and a certain number of executions, and on November 17th he left his camp and started on his famous march. Pressing on through a land of streams, crossing three rivers on rafts, he reached the Dyoor, on whose farther bank he first sighted the enemy. The current was too strong and the water too deep for rafts; but in the boats of a friendly chief he got his men across. Thence he marched to the village of Wau, on the river of that name, and interned his numerous camp-following of women and children in a stockade. On the 11th a friendly Arab reinforced him with 700 armed men, and he pushed on to Dem Idris, which he occupied and strengthened with stockades against the coming of Suleiman.

His advance was not so tardy and chequered that it found Suleiman ready. It was not till the 27th that the son of Sebehr set out; but on the following morning he fell in force upon Gessi's entrenchments. Four times did he assault; and four times was he driven

back with desperate slaughter. Broken, but not beaten, he retired to some neighbouring heights, a thousand dead and five standards the poorer for his advance. Gessi, however, was too weak to attempt the offensive. He wanted ammunition, too, and he wrote to Gordon for a further supply. Strongly reinforced and encouraged by the enemy's silence, Suleiman, on January 12th, 1879, led up his men to a fresh and even fiercer assault, and was twice hurled back as before. Gessi was now so pressed for want of ammunition that he had to gather and recast the bullets Suleiman had fired into his camp. Next morning the fight was won. Suleiman had prepared for one supreme effort, and for seven hours the event was of doubtful issue. At last, however, the slavers were completely routed. Suleiman was dragged off the field by his own men; while Gessi, leaving his entrenchments, hunted his broken host into the surrounding forests. For a fortnight Gessi lay in peace; but on the night of the 28th the enemy once more came up. One of Suleiman's shells set fire to a hut, and a high wind fanning the flames, Gessi was driven out into the open. Here, after a three hours' fight, he flung off his enemy, and then retired behind his lines to wait for ammunition.

While Gessi was thus keeping Suleiman at bay, Gordon was at work in Khartoum. He was greatly

annoyed by the cold support he received from Cairo, and greatly concerned for Gessi. The finances of the Soudan were a source of continual trouble, and he was even threatened with the unwelcome presence of Sebehr, who had promised Nubar a revenue of £25,000. Gordon knew well that this could only be effected by shipping slaves down the river; and that if Sebehr were once permitted to return to his country there was an end both to Gessi's expedition and his own royal programme. Slavery would again become the chief traffic, and the old anarchy would prevail once more. He met Nubar's suggestion with a positive and stern refusal, for he was determined to crush Suleiman as speedily as possible. He received no less than three orders to return to Cairo; but he answered decisively that the condition of affairs was critical, and that if he returned he would resign. Soon came the good news of Nubar's dismissal, of the disappearance of one of his most active enemies. Presently his anxiety about Gessi became so great, that he telegraphed repeatedly to the Khedive for permission to visit Kordofan and Darfour; and in the middle of March he was able to leave Khartoum for Shaka. His object was to dislodge the slavers from their hold, and to break it up and leave it in ruins. He had no fear for his communications with Gessi; for every mile he made would bring them nearer together. Meanwhile,

Gessi had resumed his operations. He had received fresh munitions on the 11th of March, and he determined at once to attack the enemy behind his barricades. During the engagement, a Congreve rocket set fire to the slavers' camp. The flames spread to the stockades, and the rebels were forced into a sortie. They were driven back on their defences, and they fled in disorder, leaving their fortified camp a fire-stricken ruin. The want of ammunition again kept Gessi from following up his victory. His requests for help to the Governor of Shaka and other officials were wholly disregarded; and fever breaking out in Dem Idris, his situation grew desperate.

Gordon all this while was pressing on to Shaka. The climate was bitter and changeful. Over vast tracts of sand the grasses and scrubby vegetation were withered. The heat was intense by day, and the cold intense by night. But he did good work on the road: arresting caravans of slave-dealers, releasing the slaves, and punishing the ruffians who held them. A message from Gessi, crying out for powder and shot, reached him near Edowa; and he pushed on at top speed towards Shaka, from whence he intended to forward help to Gessi, not feeling justified in risking his communications by proceeding beyond that point. On the 27th of March he crossed the frontier of Kordofan, and entered Darfour. The weather was most trying. 'I

have never,' he writes, 'in China or elsewhere, felt such heat.' During his long night-rides, he was actively engaged in solving the difficult question of the slave-trade. In the course of his calculations, a novel idea occurred to him. Seeing that all slaves must pass through Darfour from the south-west on the road to Soudan and Nubia, he determined to frame a decree that should strike the traffic at its heart. It was to consist of two regulations only: '(1) All persons residing in Darfour must have a *permis de séjour;* (2) All persons travelling to and from Darfour must have passports for themselves and *suite.*' 'Thus,' he adds, 'no person can reside in Darfour without an ostensible mode of livelihood; and no one can go to or from Darfour without Government permission for himself and his followers.' Imprisonment and confiscation of property were the penalties for infringing these regulations. But the shifting, conflicting, dubious policy of the Government on the question of legality of slavery hampered him sorely. Against the Khedive's personal orders to punish slave-dealing with death, he had to weigh the Khedive's firman declaring slave-dealing only punishable with imprisonment of from five months' to five years' duration, and Nubar's positive decision (recently telegraphed to him) that 'the purchase and sale of slaves in Egypt is legal.' Thus he was often prevented from summarily shooting the slavers

whom he captured, and was forced to be content with sending them to prison, chained with fetters off their own slaves. On this march to Shaka, he released many hundreds of slaves, all in the most wretched plight, and all of the most abject condition. He says, 'We must have caught 2,000 in less than nine months; and I expect we did not catch one-fifth of the caravans,' though of these, between June, 1878, to this date (March, 1879), he had captured no less than sixty-three. 'At Edowa,' he writes, 'a party of seven slave-dealers, with twenty-three slaves, were captured and brought to me, together with two camels. Nothing could exceed the misery of these poor wretches. Some were children of not more than three years old; they had come across that torrid zone from Shaka, a journey from which I on my camel shrink.' And again of a subsequent capture: 'When I had just begun this letter, another caravan, with two slave-dealers, and seventeen slaves, was brought in; and I hear others are on the way. Some of the poor women were quite nude. Both these caravans came from Shaka, where I mean to make a clean sweep of the slave-dealers.' Just before arriving at Shaka, a post from Gessi reached him with intelligence of his successes; and a few days later, on April the 10th, came a further message from him to the effect that he was reinforced, and needed no more troops.

This news enabled Gordon, on his arrival at Shaka, to lay by his anxieties, and proceed with his work. In the meanwhile, Gessi, having received supplies from the Bahr Gazelle, had again resolved on the offensive. All April through, he had been unremittingly active in chasing, and breaking, and punishing innumerable gangs of robbers; and in the beginning of May he set out from Dem Idris, and marched against Suleiman, who had taken refuge in Dem Suleiman, a town named in his own honour. His assault was so brilliantly planned, and so splendidly done, that Suleiman himself nearly fell into his hands. Taking possession of his capture, he learned that Suleiman had merely moved farther west, and was in the company of Rabi, one of the most formidable of the rebel slavers. He instantly started in pursuit. Through a ruined country, hideous at every mile with traces of the enemy, he pressed on. He had 600 men with him, and he was victorious; and he went on Gordon's work, at Gordon's own pace.

On the 10th of May he fell upon the village where Suleiman, it was said, lay hiding; but one sick woman was its only occupant. Past ruin after ruin, in tropical rain, and through a country harried to the very quick, he led his hungry men. In a village but newly forsaken they found some food. Beyond was a dense forest. Gessi sent out scouts, and got intelligence of a

great clump of camp-fires. Thinking that here was a slave-caravan, with the rebels themselves in force in advance of it, he divided his troops, and made a detour so as to avoid the main body, and strike the advance-guard. Missing their way a column of his army came into sudden conflict with some of the slavers under a notorious chief, Abu Shnep, and put them to rout. Meanwhile the firing had alarmed the rebel vanguard, and they set fire to the village and abandoned their position. Once again Gessi was foiled; for he found the place deserted by all save a little child, who told him that Suleiman had passed the night in that very place. Avoiding the highway, he pushed forward at top speed; and next night his camp was visited by seven men, who mistook his fires for Rabi's. Completing their blunder, they informed him, through a messenger, that they had come on from the army of Sultan Idris, who was coming up behind as fast as he might; and they begged him to delay his advance that the two forces might effect a junction. Gessi (as Rabi) made answer that he would wait for Idris on the road. But while one of the seven was taking this reply to his fellows, the six were pressed to spend the night in the camp, where they were seized and made prisoners.

This singular occurrence was both momentous and fortunate. Gessi at once resolved to attack and finish

Rabi before his ally could come up. He set off at extreme speed. At daybreak he fell upon Rabi in his camp, and utterly defeated him, securing his flag and all his stores, and only missing the chief himself through the swiftness of his horse. While the engagement was in progress, Idris and his men were on the march. The situation demanded strategy; and Gessi supplied the demand out of hand. He encamped away from the scene of Rabi's disaster, cleared the field of battle of all tell-tale signs, and ran up Rabi's standard beside his empty tent. He then despatched half-a-dozen of his men to meet Idris. These men, falling in with the Sultan as by accident, reported themselves as of Rabi's army, and out hunting. Idris bade them return and announce his approach. Gessi immediately drew his men out round a glade in the forest, and awaited the issue in ambush in the long grass. A sudden storm came on at the moment of the enemy's arrival, and he hurried in disorder to the shelter of the camp. A deadly fire was poured on him by Gessi's men, and the fury of the wind and the rain completed his demoralization. Idris himself and a few attendants alone escaped. His wealth fell into the hands of Gessi's followers. This brilliant victory broke up the league of slavers for a while; and Gessi, after an absence of nine days, marched back to Dem Suleiman with his spoils. Here he rested for some

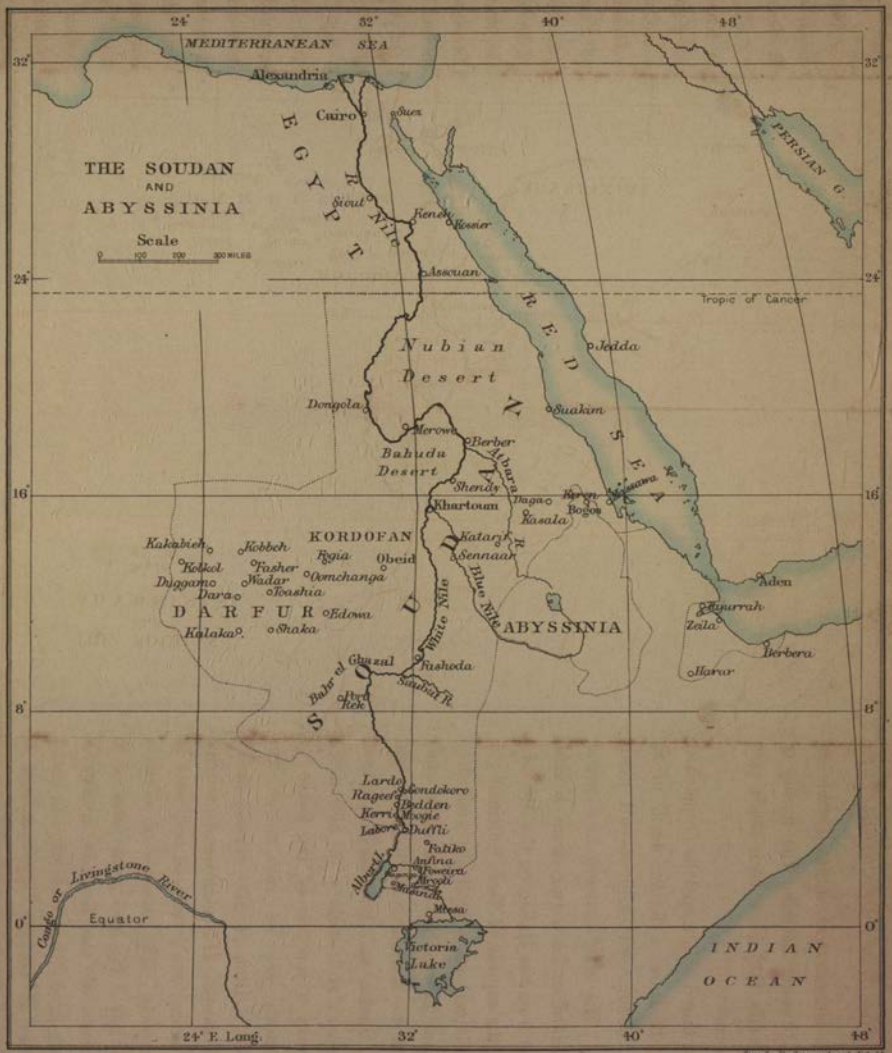
weeks, contenting himself with exploring the surrounding country, and keeping in check the many marauding bands by which the province was harassed.

While Gessi was engaging Suleiman and breaking the power of the slavers, Gordon was active in Shaka. The slavery question was ever before him. He had to consider not merely how best to stop the traffic, but how to revive the exhausted revenue, which would suffer still further from its abolition; and, also, how to obtain recruits for an army consisting of 25,000 bought or captured slaves. Beside the consideration of these intricate questions, he was indefatigable in hurrying his officials, particularly in respect of the execution of sentences on the slave-dealers. This work of supervision obliged him to make frequent and sudden movements; and his rapid rides occasioned delinquents much dismay. It was just previous to starting to Kalaka on one of these expeditions, that he heard from Gessi of his advance on Suleiman. His own position in Shaka was anything but secure. This he felt, for he writes: 'I hope soon to leave for Dara, for I am not exactly safe here. If Sebehr's son knew how few men I have, and could break away from Gessi, he might pay me a visit.' But he found that he had allies on the road, though they could not be always relied on. The various tribes of Arabs, who were scouring the country in bands, were beginning to foresee the issue of events.

The news of Gessi's exploits and Gordon's frightening activity and rapidity of movement forced them into action, and on every hand they fell on the scattered parties of slavers. Many captures were made by these dubious friends, who brought them in to Gordon *en route* to Kalaka, where they had caught and imprisoned a number of dealers. Their slaves were wandering about the country in thousands, and were being 'snapped up,' as Gordon says, 'by the native Arabs in all directions, as if they were sheep.' He reckoned there must have been a thousand in Kalaka alone. Yet it was impossible to send them back to their own countries, owing to the lack of food and water and the means of transport. From Kalaka he journeyed to Dara, leaving 100 soldiers behind him. Through a monotonous sandy plain, with a scanty vegetation of scrub, he passed from Dara to Fascher and Kobeyt in the extreme north of Darfour. At Kobeyt he learned that the route to Kalabieh and Kolkol in the west was beset by brigands, and this in spite of the garrison at the latter place. This made him push on to Kolkol; and on the 25th of May he was attacked by about 150 men, and, as he puts it, 'had a bad time' with them for four or five hours. Towards evening they were driven off, and Gordon's party encamped nine miles from Kolkol, thoroughly exhausted. He found Kolkol, the ultimate post of the

Egyptian Government, in a miserable state. 'Nothing,' he says, 'could describe the misery of these utterly useless lands, they have been made perfect deserts by the Government.'

From this desolate spot he despatched to Khartoum, by way of Dara, a forlorn band of Arabs—soldiers, officers, women and children—all utterly broken and useless. His chief concern now was for Gessi. He had received, on his return from Kolkol to Fascher, a despatch from the Italian on the 5th of June informing him of the capture of Dem Suleiman; and he believed that Suleiman was completely crushed. He started for Khartoum by way of Oomchanga and Toashia. On the road he learned that the robber chiefs had broken out of Shaka, and he feared a renewal of troubles. Haroun was still afield with 300 men, and he wished to prevent a junction of the forces; so rapidly and unexpectedly did he advance on Toashia, that he surprised a troop of 100 slavers and despoiled them of 300 slaves. His plan was to watch the wells, until the caravans, unable to hold out, were fain to surrender at discretion. The number of skulls along the road was terrible. He had great piles of them put up as monuments of the horrible cruelty of the slavers. He calculated the loss of life in Darfour during 1875-79, at 16,000 Egyptians and 50,000 natives, exclusive of the loss among the slaves, which he put



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down at from 80,000 to 100,000. He remarks at this time, 'I feel revived when I make these captures. From Oomchanga to Toashia, during say a week, we must have caught from 500 to 600. I suppose we may consider that nearly that number must have been passing every week for the last year and a half or two years along this road.'

On the 25th of June Gessi arrived. Gordon found him looking much older. Before leaving for Khartoum he made arrangements with his lieutenant for the future government of the Bahr Gazelle, presented him with £2,000, and created him a Pasha, with the second-class of the Osmanlie. Leaving his chief to make his way to Khartoum, the new Pasha returned to his old quarters. Although the rebellion was not crushed even yet, Suleiman being still at liberty, the end was not long in coming. Early in July Gessi learned of a deserter that the son of Sebehr was not far off, and was attempting a coalition with Haroun. Suleiman, the terrible Pasha at his heels, fled, with nearly 900 men towards the Gebel Marah, a difficult and little-known country; Rabi, with 700 men, retreating in another direction. Gessi had but 290 soldiers with him, but they were well armed, and flushed with victories. By an admirable forced march he overtook the enemy in the village of Gara. Surprising them in their sleep, and concealing his numbers, he persuaded them to capitu-

late. They laid down their arms in ignorance of his real strength, and great was Suleiman's mortification on learning to what a little force he had succumbed. By Gordon's orders the chiefs (including Suleiman and Abdulgassin) were afterwards shot. Rabi alone seems to have escaped. Gordon had made a hero of Gessi, and here was his reward.

Thus fell the power of Sebehr in the person of his son Suleiman, and with it the whole fabric of his ambition. Gordon's prophecy was realized to the full. Sebehr himself was tried in Cairo for rebellion against the Viceroy, found guilty, and condemned to death. But, as the Governor-General had anticipated, 'nothing was done to him.' He was suffered to live in Cairo, with a pension of £100 a month from the Khedive. The impolitic leniency did much to weaken the moral force of these splendid and ruinous attacks on the slave-trade in the Soudan.

CHAPTER XV.

AN ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY.

THE news of Gessi's final success reached Gordon at Toashia. Satisfied that the stern lessons he had himself been teaching the slave-traders were so much inspiration for the oppressed tribes, he set off, on the 29th June, 1879, for Fogia. Gessi he knew could do more than hold his own in the south; and he felt that the slave-trade had at length been dealt a powerful blow. If ineradicable, as he himself believed, it was so from causes existent at headquarters—causes over which he could exercise no control. At Fogia, he heard of Ismail's deposition, and received orders to proclaim Tewfik Khedive throughout the Soudan. Beyond acknowledging the official intelligence to Cherif Pasha, the new Khedive's minister, he did no more than telegraph the order to the several governments. He then went on to Khartoum. About this time he received from his old colleague, Li-Hung-Chang, an interesting letter, dated Tientsin, March 22nd, 1879, in reply to

his communication to the Chinese generalissimo of the 27th October, 1878. At the end of July he left Khartoum, and reached Cairo on August 23rd; and, one week later, he left that city for Massawa, on a mission to the King of Abyssinia.

He had not heard of Ismail's abdication with equanimity. He respected the late Khedive's character and abilities, however much he reprehended the morality of his statecraft. With characteristic generosity he writes: 'It grieves me what sufferings my poor Khedive Ismail has had to go through.' His instructions for the conduct of his mission to King Johannis, written in French, were couched in terms the most guarded; they were, at the same time, extremely polite to himself personally. At Cairo he had shown his annoyance at the new turn in affairs by refusing a special train, and declaring he would go to the hotel in preference to the palace prepared for him. He did not carry out the latter resolve, feeling he 'should not be justified in such a snub.' He was admitted to more than one audience of Tewfik, who expressed his entire confidence in him. In these conversations it was at first evident that the new Khedive was somewhat nervous as to whether the Governor-General was not too intimate with King Johannis. 'In fact,' says Gordon, 'the general report in Cairo was that I was going in for being Sultan! But it would not suit our family.' The Khedive, I

should note, had to deal not merely with King Johannis, but with our old acquaintance, Walad-el-Michael, who was threatened with attack by the Abyssinian, Aloula. This greatly complicated the situation, and it behoved the Khedive to act with great circumspection. Before leaving Cairo, Gordon paid off some old scores, and did much work in the hearty and determined style we know. 'I wrote,' he says 'to the Consuls-General of France and England, and told them they had interfered to get sweet things, and now they must interfere to avoid bitter things. I attacked in an official letter the Italian Consul-General, for it is an Italian who has put Johannis up to this (*i.e.*, to the claim, on Egyptian territory in Bogos, etc.), 'and I expect I made him ashamed;' and so forth. He took with him as secretary Berzati Bey, of whom he has recorded a high estimate. 'He was my most intimate friend for three years; and though we often had tiffs, I always had a great respect for his opinion. He is about twenty-nine years of age, yet perfectly self-possessed and dignified; and I can say that, in all our perils, I never saw him afraid. A few men like Berzati Bey would regenerate Egypt; but they are rare. Scoffers call him the 'black imp.' All this while the Abyssinians were actually in possession of the Bogos district. On September 11th Gordon started *en grande tenue* for Gura, where Aloula was encamped. On the

way he heard that Walad and his officers were prisoners there, by order of Johannis. He suffered much from prickly heat. The roads were terrible and the climate intolerable, yet he meditated his policy all the march through. 'I determined,' he says, 'to get rid, either *with* or *without* Johannis's help, of Walad-el-Michael and his men, and then to come to terms with Johannis. Now Johannis will not give me his help for nothing, when we persist in keeping what we have stolen from him' (*i.e.*, Bogos, etc.); 'I do not mean physical help, but moral help—*i.e.*, that he should offer a pardon—that is, an asylum to which Walad-el-Michael's men can go when they leave Bogos. Otherwise they will fight with desperation against us.' He reached Gura on the 10th, at half-past three in the afternoon, overcome with fatigue. Aloula was encamped on the top of an almost inaccessible hill, and Gordon's mule was so broken down that he had to climb to the great man's tent. The audience was not satisfactory. In a long shed, made of branches, Aloula was seated on a couch, and swathed like a mummy in white garments, even to his mouth. 'Nearly everyone had his robe to his mouth, as if something poisonous had arrived. The figure at the end never moved, and I got quite distressed, for he was so muffled up that I felt inclined to feel his pulse. He must be ill, I thought.' The apparent

invalid was in excellent health; and Gordon saw, when he showed his face, 'a good-looking young man of about thirty or thirty-five.' After a little while 'the poisonous effect had also gone off to some degree, for the others also removed their mufflers.' Aloula received the Khedive's ambassador with a good deal of the ludicrous self-importance and assumption of wisdom of Johannis himself. He put the Khedive's letter aside unread, and behaved quite slightingly throughout the audience. He condescended to inform Gordon that he might smoke if he chose, in spite of the King's decree that smokers caught in the act should lose hand and foot. He proposed that the Envoy should camp at the bottom of the hill, and climb to the top whenever he wanted an interview. This Gordon positively declined to do; so a hut was found for him near the General's shed. The result of these interviews was that Gordon agreed to see Johannis himself, and Aloula undertook not to attack Egypt in his absence.

On the 19th Gordon left Gura for Debra Tabor, near Gondar. He went by horrible roads, over the steepest mountains, through the country of Rasselas, but without a sight of the Happy Valley; and so towards the Abyssinian capital—'crawling over the world's crust.' Near Adowa, on the 27th, he passed the Amba, the mountain prison where Walad-el-Michael was interned. Of this he says, 'When you get close

to it you have to be hauled up in a basket. There was a tent pitched on the top, in which—to-day being the first of the Abyssinian year, as the King's interpreter told me—there was feasting.' After a fatiguing march by execrable bridle-paths, the river Tacazzi was reached on October 12th. Here he heard from the officer of Aloula, who travelled with him, that a robber chief with 300 men was meditating attack, and was reported to have said, when he heard that Gordon's luggage and presents for the king were not with him, that he would 'Take the Pasha and the black imp, and get the boxes afterwards.' He also heard of another robber on the road between Galabat and Debra Tabor, with several guns; as he himself had only six black soldiers this was not reassuring. On October 27th, however, without further adventure he arrived at Debra Tabor, convinced that Aloula had sent him through a network of by-ways to impress him with the difficulties of the country in case the Khedive should declare war.

He was received at the court of Johannis with a salute of guns. With the King at Debra Tabor were Ras Arya, his father; the Itagé, or high-priest; the Greek Consul from Suez; an Italian named Bianchi; and two Italians named Neretti. The night of his arrival Gordon was visited by fifteen black soldiers, who had been captured at Gondet in November, 1875,

and nine Arabs, whom Aloula had made prisoners at Ailat in January, 1877; these men all begged him to intercede with Johannis for their release. Next day he had his audience. Johannis began with a tedious recital of his grievances against Egypt, and asked Gordon what was the nature of his mission. He was referred to the Khedive's letter, which it appeared had not even been translated. He then put forward a number of outrageous claims: the 'retrocession of Metemna, Changallas, and Bogos, cession of Zeila and Amphilla (ports), an Abouna, and a sum of money from one to two million pounds.' As alternatives, he suggested that he should take Bogos, Massawa, and the Abouna; adding: 'I could claim Dongola, Berber, Nubia, and Sennaar, but will not do so. Also, I want a certain territory near Harrar.' 'Here,' Gordon remarks, 'his Majesty seemed a little out in his geography, so he added that he would waive that claim for the moment.' These demands were thought too monstrous, even considered as a price for peace; and Gordon told His Majesty, in his private capacity, that he did not think the Khedive would accept them, and urged him to put into writing what he considered his just dues. Johannis shuffled, and suggested a new discussion at some neighbouring baths which he proposed to visit. Gordon acquiesced, and presented him through Berzati Bey with presents worth £200.

Nothing occurred till November 6th. In the interim Gordon discovered that the King was backed in his obstinacy by the intrigues of the Greek Consul and others. On the 6th Johannis returned from the baths without the written claims. But to these Gordon determined to fix him. He told His Majesty that he had positive orders not to cede Bogos, or any territory, but that he would use his private influence to obtain for him an Abouna, the free import of arms, and letters for himself at Massawa and Bogos. At length, on the 8th he was assured he should receive the written demands in the form of a letter to the Khedive. He had an audience that day however, and found the King in a sulky and resentful humour. Johannis bade him go back, and added that he would forward a letter to the Khedive by an envoy of his own. Gordon then asked for the release of the Egyptian soldiers. This enraged the King, who told him to go.

An hour after he went. Just as he was starting, the interpreter brought him the letter and $1,000. The money he returned, but at his first halt on the road he opened the letter, in his capacity as envoy, suspecting a trick, and found it only twelve lines long. He saw that, making allowance for the usual salutation and valediction, it could not possibly contain the specific statement required. Translated he found it ran in these insulting terms: 'I have received the letters you sent

me by *that man.* I will not make a secret peace with you. If you want peace, ask the Sultans of Europe.' He wrote to the Greek Consul, demanding an explanation, and was answered, 'that the King said he had written as he saw fit, and, if he judged right, would write other letters to the Khedive.' Gordon calmly pursued his road to Galabat, intending to reach Khartoum by way of Katarif, instead of following the mountainous route he had travelled from Massawa. Before him, a revolted chief named Gadassi occupied the country, and to him he applied for an escort of 200 men. Waiting a reply, he encamped at Char Amba, the Gate of Abyssinia, fronting a gorge in the mountains that commanded a prospect of the Soudanese plains. At five in the afternoon he was suddenly arrested by 120 of Johannis's men under three of Ras Arya's officers, and the little party was marched back to the village of the King's uncle. Gordon, on the way, destroyed his journal, that it might not fall into the hands of Johannis. Ras Arya was a cunning, self-seeking fellow, with an eye to bribes. He had once despatched a false embassy to Gordon at Katarif, and he now entertained him with hearty abuse of Johannis. He even suggested that the Khedive should take the country, as everyone was disgusted with the King. Gordon gave him £70 to ensure the safe passage of his telegrams to Galabat. On the 17th the party, still guarded,

passed on to Gondar, and reached Ras-Garamudhiri. Here the escort left them, and for a while they were free. Over snowy mountains, and suffering considerably from the want of shelter (for he had no tents), Gordon pushed forward to the frontier, not without an expenditure of £1,400 in gold for bribes in the shape of tolls and safe-conduct. At Kya-Khor, a village on the frontier, he was again arrested, and subjected to a great deal of bullying and extortion. At last, on December 8th, he reached Massawa, and there he was lucky enough to find the *Seagull*, an English gunboat.

Thus ended this fatiguing and fruitless mission. The Khedive had shown himself indifferent to his envoy's safety and the honour of his own name. He had taken no notice of Gordon's application for troops and a steamer, which, on his arrest by Johannis, he had desired should be sent to Massawa. Considerable apprehension was felt as to his safety. Had it not been for the timely despatch of the *Seagull*, affairs might have taken an awkward turn.

There is nothing surprising in Johannis's wish to make Gordon a prisoner; rather is it a wonder that it did not take effect in the court itself. The uncompromising candour with which the Envoy unburdened his mind to this King of Kings would have cost most envoys their lives. Gordon had told him

that 'the King would be better if he would not try and be God;' and 'that six feet of earth would hold the one as it would the other.' Another and not smaller source of irritation was that the King's people—especially the beggars—crowded round Gordon's tent, deserting his Majesty; and that the strange ambassador walked about, unguarded, and on foot. The following amusing account of an interview between this extraordinary pair was given not long after the Governor-General's return:

'When Gordon Pasha was lately taken prisoner by the Abyssinians he completely checkmated King John. The King received his prisoner sitting on his throne, or whatever piece of furniture did duty for that exalted seat, a chair being placed for the prisoner considerably lower than the seat on which the King sat. The first thing the Pasha did was to seize this chair, place it alongside that of his Majesty, and sit down on it; the next to inform him that he met him as an equal and would only treat him as such. This somewhat disconcerted his sable Majesty, but on recovering himself he said, "Do you know, Gordon Pasha, that I could kill you on the spot if I liked?" "I am perfectly well aware of it, your Majesty," said the Pasha. "Do so at once if it is your royal pleasure. I am ready." This disconcerted the King still more, and he exclaimed, "What! ready to be killed!" "Certainly," replied the Pasha; "I am always ready to die, and so far from fearing your putting me to death, you would confer a favour on me by so doing, for you would be doing for me that which I am precluded by my religious scruples from doing for

myself—you would relieve me from all the troubles and misfortunes which the future may have in store for me." This completely staggered King John, who gasped out in despair, "Then my power has no terrors for you?" "None whatever," was the Pasha's laconic reply. His Majesty, it is needless to add, instantly collapsed.'

Gordon returned to Egypt at the end of the year. He had sent in his resignation to the Khedive on his way; and universal was the regret at his determination to quit the country in which he had wrought so much good. Much as the ex-Khedive had been blamed for his misrule, it was unanimously acknowledged that he had done an act of eminent wisdom in appointing Gordon to the Governor-Generalship of the Soudan; and few could resist the temptation of comparing his appreciation of the great Proconsul with Tewfik's. Against the latter there was a general feeling of resentment, even of indignation; this notwithstanding the tenour of the Viceroy's letter to his Governor-General on his arrival at Alexandria: 'I am glad to see you again among us, and have pleasure in once more acknowledging the loyalty with which you have always served the Government,' writes the Khedive. 'I should have liked to retain your services, but in view of your persistent tender of resignation am obliged to accept it. I regret, my dear Pasha, losing your co-operation, and in parting with you must express my sincere thanks to you, assuring you that my

remembrance of you and your services to the country will outlive your retirement.'

The fact is that what took the world by surprise at the time had been decided on months before. Gordon, before going to Abyssinia, had been urged by certain ministers, notably Riaz, Cherif, and Nubar, to make certain reforms in his Government, of which he did not approve; and he thereupon announced his intention to quit the Soudan. It was only as a personal favour to the Khedive that he carried letters to King Johannis at all. This he had done at the peril of his life. On his return to Egypt the interfering ministers began their interfering once more. There were stormy interviews between Gordon and Nubar and Riaz. They grumbled angrily at his proposed cession of Zeila to the Abyssinians, and they resented the fact that the proposal had reached the papers. That it had done so was entirely their own fault; for the suggestion had been telegraphed to them in cipher. These unpleasant conferences, with what had gone before, led to his final resignation. 'I am neither a Napoleon nor a Colbert,' was his reply to some one who spoke to him in praise of his beneficence in the Soudan; 'I do not profess either to have been a great ruler or a great financier; but I can say this—I have cut off the slave-dealers in their strongholds, and I made the people love me.' What Gordon had done was to

justify Ismail's description of him eight months before. 'They say I do not trust Englishmen,' said the old Khedive. 'Do I mistrust Gordon Pasha? That is an honest man; an administrator, not a diplomatist.'

Apart from the difficulties of serving the new Khedive, Gordon longed for rest. The first year of his rule as Governor of the tribes—during which he had done his own work and other men's—the long marches, the terrible climate, the perpetual anxieties—all had told upon him. Since then he had had three years of desperate labour, and ridden some 8,500 miles. Who can wonder that he resented the impertinences of the Pashas, whose interference was not for the good of his government or his people, but solely for their own.

But it was not for him to stay on and complain. To one of the worst of these Pashas he sent a telegram, which ran: 'Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin.' Then he sailed for England, bearing with him the memory of the enthusiastic crowd of friends who bade him farewell at Cairo. I am told that his name sends a thrill of love and admiration through the Soudan even yet. A hand so strong and so beneficent had never before been laid on the people of that unhappy land.

CHAPTER XVI.

'THE UNCROWNED KING.'

Only a few weeks' rest fell to him on his return. These were spent for the most part in London and at Southampton. His treatment at the hands of Egypt, and his subsequent resignation, made a great stir. The general feeling was one of regret rather than surprise. Everybody knew of his magnificent campaign against the slave-trade, unaided and alone; and that, unless support were given him, he must sooner or later abandon the task. The manner in which his services had been contemned by the government which had been so eager to secure them, was looked on as a disgrace; and it was felt as a certainty that the traffic he had broken and ruined would be revived ere long.

The English Press could not say enough in his praise; and, with reference to the vast province over which he had ruled, it was for a time the fashion to call him 'The Uncrowned King.' The same attempt

as before, but if anything a more strenuous one, was made by the fashionable world to lionize him. And many amusing stories might be told of the way in which he avoided those who sought him out; as well as of the strategy he employed to elude the many invitations sent in.

Early in May, when the London world was discussing the resignation of one Viceroy of India, and the accession of another, people were amazed at the announcement that Lord Ripon had asked Gordon to be his private secretary, and that Gordon had said 'yes.' Many at first refused to believe; and when it was telegraphed to India, it created a sensation not unmixed with alarm. One correspondent wrote that, 'with the arrival of Colonel Gordon, we shall have an end of favouritism, and all cliqueism will disappear from the face of official society.' The journals themselves were not so sanguine. 'Official society without cliques and favouritism is to us unimaginable,' says one. 'If Colonel Gordon were Viceroy, he could not entirely eradicate these deep-seated diseases. But if our correspondent means —as we suppose he does—that no cliqueism, nor favouritism, nor any meanness, nor charlatanism will receive any toleration from Colonel Gordon, but will meet with stern suppression, so far as he may have power to deal with it, then we agree with him. There

is not in the world a man of gentler, kindlier nature than Colonel Gordon; we know of no man more terrible to shams and charlatans. His mere presence in Indian society will be a kind of shock which will send a shiver through all its vanities, and may indeed in time create a sort of revolution.'

There is little doubt that many thought the appointment an absurdity. The expression of such an opinion was checked by a belief in the existence of occult reasons for inducing so illustrious a soldier to fill so unimportant a post. The Central Asian Question had been recently revived; the effects of the Afghan War were being hotly discussed; and the Government was credited with an ulterior aim—that of entrusting to one man the solution of a problem which had already baffled hundreds, and will baffle hundreds more.*

* Mr. Charles Marvin, in his 'Merv, the Queen of the World,' speaking of the importance of establishing a barrier between Russia and India, showed his appreciation of such a choice in the following terms:

'To select the border-line between the English and Russian empires in Asia, there should be no appointment of committees or commissions; the task should be given to a single man. In the multitude of counsel there may be wisdom, but rarely, if ever, decision. It is with public affairs as with private: one man will always carry out a scheme more quickly, more cheaply, and more satisfactorily than a committee of a dozen. You have the advantage of aggregate wisdom in confiding a task to a committee; you have the drawback of their aggregate foolishness. Even if you are lucky in securing a choice selection of sages, experience warns you beforehand that the more their

So it came to pass that he who had been a Sultan suddenly became a secretary, though it was said at the time that there was not a post from Constantinople eastward which would have been too much for him. As for Gordon himself, he accepted the appointment in the spirit in which he would accept any station in life, high or humble, provided that out of it good might come. And the world took it for granted that he went as something more than as a mere secretary.

Towards the end of May, the Viceroy left London

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originality the greater will be the conflict of opinion, which can only end in a compromise—a term signifying feebleness of decision.

'No; we should choose a good man for the solution of the Anglo-Russian Frontier Question; we should allow him to choose his own advisers; we should give him abundance of time to form his own opinions on the subject. He should have unlimited funds to conduct explorations and to appoint assistant explorers. He should visit in succession Russia and Persia, to realize correctly the genius of those countries. He should have absolute freedom in the preparation of his plan, and the plan when complete should be made the basis of a definite and final settlement of the Central Asian Question.

'I may be asked to point out the Atlas who can bear this enormous responsibility upon his shoulders. We have not to go far to seek him. His name is well known. He is not the offspring of a clique; he is not the creature of a faction. He has fought well, he has ruled well. His Christian piety is a proverb among those who know him; his scorn of pelf and preferment is so remarkable that he almost stands alone—he hardly belongs to a place-hunting, money-grubbing generation. He possesses the entire confidence of all parties; he enjoys the admiration and love of the nation. Russia knows nothing to his detriment, and he has recently earned her respect by his disinterested exertions on her behalf in the distant East. I have no need to utter his name. It springs spontaneously to the reader's lips—Chinese Gordon.'

for his seat of Government, and loud were the cheers for him and his secretary as the train moved out of the station at Charing Cross. The journey was watched with eager interest by the public, and the correspondents kept them well informed by telegram of what happened at the several stages. The surprise at the appointment was great, but a greater was in store. Hardly had we heard of the Viceroy's arrival in Bombay, when we heard of Gordon's resignation The Anglo-Indian journalists were right who said there was something whimsical in turning Gordon Pasha into a small official; the anomaly had proved impossible. With perfect frankness and simplicity, and in a spirit of self-accusation which everybody could but applaud, Gordon gave his reasons for the unexpected step he had taken. He wrote: 'Men, at times, owing to the mysteries of Providence, form judgments which they afterwards repent of. This is my case in accepting the appointment Lord Ripon honoured me in offering me. I repented of my act as soon as I had accepted the appointment, and I deeply regret that I had not the moral courage to say so at that time. Nothing could have exceeded the kindness and consideration with which Lord Ripon has treated me. I have never met anyone with whom I could have felt greater sympathy in the arduous task he has undertaken.'

The words were a puzzle to many; not a few believed the announcement to be a hoax. The way in which it was received by the press is somewhat amusing. To a large number it proved at once that Gordon could never have fulfilled his duties: 'He would be more at home in the Soudan where he was a king, or in China where he was a general, than in the private secretary's room in Government House.' To some he was mad, or at best a 'little eccentric;' others were aggrieved at his suppression of his motives. When this last complaint reached his ears, he said at once that, in such a position, with a turbulent spirit like his, he would be likely to do more harm than good, and would only too probably hamper the Viceroy, and involve him in difficulties.

He had resigned on June 3rd. He was planning a journey to Zanzibar to help the Sultan, Syed Burghash, in a campaign against the slave-dealers, when he was suddenly summoned to Pekin. His old colleague, Li-Hung-Chang, had sent him a message through Mr. Hart, Chinese Commissioner of Customs. The despatch had been sent to Mr. Campbell, Mr. Hart's agent in London, who seeing the news of the resignation, at once forwarded it to India. Thus ran the telegram: 'I am directed to invite you to China. Please come and see for yourself. This opportunity for doing really useful work on a large scale ought

not to be lost. Work, position, conditions can all be arranged with yourself here to your satisfaction. Do take six months' leave and come.' 'The Uncrowned King,' replied: 'Inform Hart, Gordon will leave for Shanghai first opportunity. As for conditions, Gordon indifferent.' Government was at once applied to for the requisite leave; but as his purpose in going and the position he was to hold on his arrival could not be explained, permission was withheld. Upon this he referred the Government to Mr. Campbell, sent in his papers to the War Office, and sailed on the 12th June for Hong Kong. As everyone knows, war was imminent between Russia and China, and great excitement prevailed at St. Petersburg when his departure got wind. A report was current that he had gone to China to organise another Ever-Victorious Army. 'It is all the work of Lord Beaconsfield,' said the excited *Golos;* and it hoped that Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville would blast the adventure with public displeasure. Gordon, with his wonted foresight, had anticipated the misconstruction to which his visit was open, and had told his purpose before leaving India. 'My fixed desire,' he said, 'is to persuade the Chinese not to go to war with Russia, both in their own interests and those of the world, and especially those of England. To me it appears that the question in dispute cannot be of such vital importance that an

arrangement could not be come to by concessions on both sides. Whether I succeed in being heard or not, is not in my hands. I protest, however, against being regarded as one who wishes for war in any country, still less in China. In the event of war breaking out, I could not answer how I should act for the present; but I shall ardently desire a speedy peace. Inclined, as I am, with only a small degree of admiration for military exploits, I esteem it a far greater honour to promote peace than to gain any paltry honours in a wretched war.'

He arrived at Hong Kong on the 2nd July, and at once received an invitation to stay at Government House from Sir John and Lady Hennesey. At Canton he paid a visit to the Viceroy, and saw many of his old friends in the City of Rams. When they asked him of his personal attitude towards China, he said that if his opinion were sought at Pekin, he should give the 'quinine and mixture,' but not ask them to take it. He wished his visit to be clearly understood as unofficial, as indeed it was: he was taking a holiday, and had come to see his old friend Li. When the interviewers inquired his views as to the formation of an Anglo-Chinese force in case of war, he said: 'I should strongly advise the Chinese to use their own forces; they do not want to teach the men to right-wheel and left-dress, and to show up a

good line as soldiers are expected to do, because fighting is done more now by skirmishing.' He earnestly recommended the Chinese, too, not to go to work with 'cut flowers:' meaning that it was useless to take a lot of trained men, put them in the field, and as soon as the season is over let them all disperse again. It was the same at Tientsin and Pekin—to all he spoke with equal frankness.

Since the days when they two had fought together against the Tai-pings, Li had proved himself a great soldier and administrator—had, in fact, justified Gordon's opinion that he was the ablest man in China. He had filled the highest positions in the councils of the empire: he had been Junior Guardian of the Heir-Apparent, and Governor-General of Nankin; he had received the hereditary title of the Third Degree, the Double-Eyed Peacock's Feather, and the Yellow Jacket; now he was Senior Guardian to the Heir-Apparent, and Senior Grand Secretary and Viceroy of Chihli. The growth of his power had been so rapid that more than once he had been suspected of designs upon the Dragon Throne, and more than once he had been severely rebuked from the Throne itself. These suspicions were due to his belief in the Barbarian and his methods: to an unfaltering faith in the value of foreign principles and progress, of foreign policy, and of foreign arms. It was natural that so powerful a satrap should

have a rival. Li had his in the person of Tso, a soldier-statesman like himself, who had seen service against the Tai-pings—he, indeed, who led the Franco-Chinese in 1864, while Gordon was winning his supreme victories. These two great intelligences figured as the heads of two powerful parties; Tso was in favour of war, Li was in favour of peace. Never perhaps were the positions of the two more clearly defined than when Gordon, on his old colleague's invitation, appeared upon the scene. It was thought that the tussle between the war party, led by Prince Chun and Tso, and the peace party, led by Prince Kung and Li, was not unlikely to have a tragic end. For a time it seemed as though the war party would get the upper hand; its adherents even began to speculate as to what would be the fate of Li and the Prince. Li was sending urgent messages to the Taotais, bearing the significant 'fire-mark,' with a view to ascertaining what support, in the event of civil war, he might command, when the Captain of the Ever-Victorious Army came to Pekin. When Li-Hung-Chang saw his old friend he fell on his neck and kissed him. Seventeen years before he had brought peace to China; he brought it once more. He conferred with Li—with all the great satraps of the empire; and he turned the scale.

When Li and the others asked his advice, he gave it in a memorandum, the wise and relentless outspokenness

of which had the effect of bringing about the peace he was so anxious to maintain. Here it is: a state paper of the highest importance, in any case; and perhaps, after the campaign of the Ever-Victorious Army, the true beginning of the regeneration of China:

'China possesses a long-used military organization, a regular military discipline. Leave it intact. It is suited to her people.

'China in her numbers has the advantage over other Powers. Her people are inured to hardships. Arm with breech-loaders, accustom to the use and care of breech-loaders, and no more is needed for her infantry. Breech-loaders ought to be bought on some system, and the same general system applicable to the whole nation. It is not advisable to manufacture them; though means of repair should be established at certain centres.

'Breech-loading ammunition should be manufactured at different centres. Breech-loaders of various patterns should not be bought, though no objection could be offered to a different breech-loader in, say, four provinces from that used in another group of four provinces. Any breech-loaders which will carry well up to 1,000 yards would be sufficient. It is not advisable to spend money on the superior breech-loaders carrying farther. Ten breech-loaders, carrying up to 1,000

yards, could be bought for the same money as five breech-loaders of a superior class, carrying to 1,500 yards. For the Chinese it would cost more time to teach the use of the longer-range rifle than it is worth; and then probably, if called to use it, in confusion the scholar would forget his lesson. This is known to be the case; therefore buy ordinary breech-loading rifles of 1,000 yards range, of simple construction, of solid form. Do not go into purchasing a very light, delicately made rifle. A Chinese soldier does not mind one or two pounds more weight, for he carries no knapsack or kit. China's power is in her numbers, in the quick moving of her troops, in the little baggage they require, in their few wants. It is known that men armed with sword and spear can overcome the best regular troops; if armed with the best breech-loading rifles and well instructed in every way, if the country is at all difficult, and if the men with the spears and swords outnumber their foe ten to one. If this is the case when men are armed with spears and swords, it will be much truer when the same are armed with ordinary breech-loaders.

'China should never engage in pitched battles. Her strength is in quick movements, in cutting off the trains of baggage, and in night attacks not pushed home; in a continuous worrying of her enemies. Rockets should be used instead of cannon. No artillery

should be moved with the troops. It delays and impedes them. Infantry fire is the most fatal fire; guns make a noise far out of proportion to their value in war. If guns are taken into the field, troops cannot march faster than those guns. The degree of speed at which the guns can be carried along dictates the speed at which the troops can march. Therefore very few guns, if any, ought to be taken; and those few should be smooth-bored, large-bore breech-loaders, consisting of four parts, to be screwed together when needed for use. Chinese accustomed to make forts of earth ought to continue this, and study the use of trenches for the attack of cities. China should never attack forts. She ought to wait and starve her foes out, and worry them night and day. China should have a few small-bored very long range wall-pieces, rifled and breach-loaders. They are light to carry, and if placed a long way off will be safe from attack. If the enemy comes out to take them, the Chinese can run away; and if the enemy takes one or two, it is no loss. Firing them in the enemy's camp, a long way off, would prevent the enemy sleeping; and if he does not sleep, then he gets ill and goes into hospital, and then needs other enemies to take care of him, and thus the enemies' numbers are reduced. When an enemy comes up and breaks the wall of the city, the Chinese soldiers ought not to stay and fight the enemy; but to go out and attack the

trains of baggage in the rear, and worry him on the roads he came by. By keeping the Chinese troops lightly loaded with baggage, with no guns, they can move two to every one li the enemy marches. To-day the Chinese will be before him; to-morrow they will be behind him; the next day they will be on his left hand; and so on till the enemy gets tired and cross with such long walks, and his soldiers quarrel with their officers and get sick.

'The Chinese should make telegraphs in the country, as a rule, to keep the country quiet and free from false rumours; but with the Chinese soldiers in the field, they should use sun-signals, by the means of the heliograph. These are very easy, and can do no harm. For this purpose a small school should be established in each centre. Chinese ought not to try torpedoes, which are very difficult to manage. The most simple torpedoes are the best and the cheapest, and their utility is in having many of them. China can risk sowing them thickly; for if one of them does go astray and sink a Chinese junk, the people of the junk ought to be glad to die for their country. If torpedoes are only used at certain places, then the enemy knows that he has to look out when near these places; but when every place may have torpedoes, he can never feel safe; he is always anxious; he cannot sleep; he gets ill and dies. The fact of an enemy living in

constant dread of being blown up is much more advantageous to China than if she blew up one of her enemies, for anxiety makes people ill and cross. Therefore China ought to have cheap simple torpedoes, which cannot get out of order, which are fired by a fuze, *not* by electricity, and plenty of them. She ought not to buy expensive complicated torpedoes.

'China should buy no more big guns to defend her sea-coast. They cost money. They are a great deal of trouble to keep in order, and the enemy's ships have too thick sides for any gun China can buy to penetrate them. China ought to defend her sea-coast by very heavy mortars. They cost very little; they are easy to use; they only want a thick parapet in front, and they are fired from a place the enemy cannot see; whereas the enemy can see the holes from which guns are fired. The enemy cannot get safe from a mortar-shot; it falls on the deck, and there it breaks everything. China can get 500 mortars for the same money she gets an 18-ton gun for. If China loses them, the loss is little. No enemy could get into a port which is defended by 15,000 large mortars and plenty of torpedoes, which must be very simple. Steam-launches, with torpedoes on a pole, furnish the best form of movable torpedo. For the Chinese fleet, small quick vessels, with very light draught of water, and not any great weight of armour, are best. If

China buys big vessels they cost a great deal, and all her eggs are in one basket—namely, she loses all her money at once. For the money of one large vessel China would get twelve small vessels. China's strength is in the creeks, not in the open seas.

'Nothing recommended in this paper needs any change in Chinese customs. The army is the same, and China needs no Europeans or foreigners to help her to carry out this programme. If China cannot carry out what is here recommended, then no one else can do so. Besides, the programme is a cheap one.

'With respect to the fleet, it is impossible to consider that in the employment of foreigners China can ever be sure of them in case of war with the country they belong to; while, on the other hand, if China asks a foreign Power to lend her officers, then that foreign Power who lends them will interfere with her. The question is: (1) Is it better for China to get officers here and there, and run the risk of their officers not being trustworthy? or (2), Is it better for China to think what nation there is who would be likely to be good friends with China in good weather and in bad weather; and then for China to ask that nation to lend China the officers she wants for her fleet? I think No. 2 is the best and safest for China.

'Remember, with this programme China wants no big officer from foreign Powers; I say big officer, because I

am a big officer in China. If I stayed in China it would be bad for China, because it would vex the American, French, and German Governments, who would want to send their officers. Besides, I am not wanted. China can do what I recommend herself. If she cannot, I could do no good.'

This manifesto excited a storm of comment both at home and abroad. The native journals, into which it was instantly translated, were almost unanimous in recommending their Government to lose no time in putting its precepts into practice, the more so as they emanated from the man who, in saving China in the field, had learned exactly how best she might save herself. Li needed no promptings; he was too large-minded and vigorous a statesman to waste such precious counsels. They were followed to the letter. The armies of China are of Gordon's making; and in wars yet to be the spirit of her Ever Victorious General will still be her guidance.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FIRST FAILURE.

He returned to London in the winter of 1881, to find himself the object of more attention than ever before. The papers gave him a hearty welcome, and many were the speculations as to what he would do next. His own wish was to leave for Syria, and there take the rest he so much needed; but the plan, dear as it was to him, was soon abandoned. He visited Ireland, and gave his whole mind to her troubles. A friend to whom he addressed his views, published them. They were daring, they were new, they were thorough; but they were not such views as the majority could approve, and they met with some adverse criticism and a little ridicule. Gordon cared as much for the one as the other. He took a deep interest in the question of the evacuation of Candahar, and his opinions, though all could not agree with them, had doubtless no little influence in deciding the course that was pursued.

The fact is, he may be said to have avoided the repose he talked about so much; for, besides taking an active interest in all the questions of the hour, he paid a visit to the King of the Belgians to discuss an International Expedition to the Congo, which His Majesty wished him to lead. In short, a brief stay on the Lake of Lausanne was the only holiday he gave himself; for, in May, he had abandoned all idea of going to Syria, and was making preparations for a journey to Mauritius, whither he had been ordered as Commanding Royal Engineer. The announcement gave great satisfaction to many of his admirers; it was felt that, although the position was not a prominent one, it was, at any rate, one in which he would serve his own country, and be at the disposal of the authorities, should any necessity arise for calling upon him to undertake more important duties.

At this time, the news of the death of his lieutenant, Romulus Gessi, reached England. It was a blow to him for he knew that with the life of his fellow-worker ended all the good he had achieved in the Soudan,—good which, in his master's absence, Gessi had striven to perpetuate, and to the trials of which he had succumbed. 'He died on the evening of the 30th April in the French hospital at Suez, after protracted sufferings caused by the terrible privations in the months of November and December last, when he was shut

in by an impassable barrier of weed in the Bahr Gazelle River.' That was his epitaph in the press. Gordon, on his way to Mauritius, stopped at Suez, and visited the grave of his follower. The period of his sojourn in Mauritius—some ten months—was not eventful; it was, however, a happy and a peaceful time. He became deeply interested in the Seychelles; he made some curious researches concerning the site of the Garden of Eden; he planned and suggested certain excellent schemes for the defence of the Indian Ocean. On March 6th he was made a Major-General, and, on April 4th, 1882, he left Mauritius for the Cape. The Government had asked his services, and he was free to give them.

Subsequent events have made the precise wording of the telegrams which led to his departure important. The first, dated February 23rd, 1882, from Sir Hercules Robinson to the Earl of Kimberley, runs as follows:

'Ministers request me to inquire whether her Majesty's Government would permit them to obtain the services of Colonel Gordon, R.E., C.B. Ministers desire to invite Colonel Gordon to come to this country for the purpose of consultation as to the best measures to be adopted with reference to Basutoland in the event of Parliament sanctioning their proposals as to that territory, and to engage his services, should he be prepared to renew the offer made to their predecessors,

in April, 1881, to assist in terminating the war and administering Basutoland.'

The second, from the Premier, Cape, to Colonel Gordon, March 3rd, 1882, runs thus:

'Position of matters in Basutoland grave, and of utmost importance that Colony secure services of some one of proved ability, firmness and energy. Government therefore resolved asking whether you are disposed to renew offer which they learn you made, last April, to former Ministry. They do not expect you to be bound by salary then stated. Should you agree to place services at disposal this Government, it is very important you should at once visit the Colony, in order to learn facts bearing on situation. Could you do this at once you would confer signal favour upon Colony, leaving your future action unpledged. To prepare the way, application was made to Lord Kimberley, with view to ascertain if Government had objection to your entering this Government's service. From reply received, I learn that War Office gives consent. It is impossible within limits telegram to enter fully into case, and, in communication with you, Government rely upon same devotion to duty which prompted former offer, to excuse this sudden request.'

The offer to which these telegrams refer was made by Gordon to the Premier of the Cape Government, on April 7th, 1881, and it was this:

'Chinese Gordon offers his services for two years at £700 a year to assist in terminating war and administering Basutoland.'

Thus it was evident that the object with which Gordon was invited to place his services at the disposal of the Cape Government was twofold: he was '*to assist in terminating the war and in administrating Basutoland.*' I am disposed to lay some stress on this because in the previous year the Deputy-Adjutant-General, R.E., War Office, London, had telegraphed to Gordon at Lausanne, that the Cape Government offered him the *command of the Colonial forces*, with a proposed salary of £1,500 a year, which offer he had declined. Yet when he arrived at the Cape, after a miserable month's voyage in a sailing vessel, the only post offered him was that of *Commandant-General of the Colonial Forces.* Sir Hercules Robinson, Merriman, and the Premier all said that they wanted him to take charge of the Basuto question, but that they did not like to remove Orpen—in whom they had no confidence—as his removal would be unpopular. Thus, on May 18th, 1882, we find Gordon installed in the very appointment he had declined to accept two years before, and in no way officially concerned in the administration of Basutoland, which was probably his chief motive in accepting the invitation of the Colonial Government. It was altogther a bad beginning. Certainly it was strange behaviour on the part of the Government; they had distinctly led Gordon to believe that they needed his services not as com-

mander of their forces, but solely as adviser and administrator. But as the post he took was stated to be merely temporary, he doubtless believed that the Government intended later on to employ him officially as at first proposed. On May 21st then, he addressed a memorandum to the Ministers and the Governor. It stated that in his opinion the primary mistake was that, in transferring Basutoland from the Imperial Government to that of the Cape, the Basutos themselves had never been consulted; and it suggested that to correct this mistake the Basutos should be called together and encouraged to discuss the terms of their agreement with the Colonial Governor. It stated, moreover, that he, the author, did not believe that there was any real antagonism between Letsea and Masupha: that Letsea only pretended to oppose Masupha and side with the Colony, and that all the while he was inspiriting his supposed enemy to so behave towards the Government as to keep them in perpetual hot water. No answer was returned to this memorandum.

On the 29th of May Gordon proceeded to King William's Town and drew up the report on the Colonial forces, which the Premier had requested him to make. It was both able and exhaustive. Gordon suggested many changes, and showed that the Colony could save £7,000 a year, and yet maintain an army

8,000 strong, instead of 1,600 as it then was. This, of course, meant economy in new directions; Gordon had begun with himself, and had accepted only two-thirds of the salary offered him, saying that the Colony could not afford to pay more. The report and his suggestions were laid before the Cape Parliament; but, like the memorandum which had preceded them, they were left unnoticed.

On the 4th of June, the Premier requested the General to go up country and report on the trekking of the Boers into native territory, and on the condition of the native holdings in the Transkei. This Gordon at once proceeded to do. He sent in a third memorandum, to the effect that the natives were goaded into rebellion by the badness and inefficiency of the magistracy. Hereupon the Government asked him to suggest remedies, and to embody his suggestions in a series of regulations. He did so; and, as twice before, no notice whatever was taken of his work.

By this time, he had been in the Colony some ten weeks only. During this short period, however, he had made himself master, not only of the condition of the forces under his command, but also to a very great extent of the facts and circumstances which were the source of all the native troubles. As will be seen from what I have already stated (of the accuracy of which I have complete evidence)

Gordon, during these ten weeks, was used by the Government rather as an adviser than as a commander-in-chief—as an adviser who would presently become an administrator as well, in the event of his views being suited to those of the Ministers. Presumably they were not. His advice was not regarded, his recommendations fell on idle or indifferent ears.

This action on the part of the Government is noteworthy; it quite justified Gordon in the course he adopted a little later on, when the Ministry requested him to go to Basutoland. This was on the 18th of July; and he replied by a memorandum enclosing a copy of a proposed convention, by which the Basutos would have semi-independence under a Resident, and stating that it was impossible for the Government to revert to the condition of things that existed before the war. Of course he waited vainly for an answer. This time, however, he sent a private note to the Premier, saying that it was quite useless for him to go up to Basutoland, unless the Government were prepared to acknowledge his presence and take account of his proposals. This, of course, was tantamount to saying, 'You invite me to your Colony as adviser and administrator; when I come you give me a post I had already refused, employ me in an amateur way in the other two capacities, and take no notice of the results of my work. This being the case, please leave me to my

official duties as Commander-in-Chief, and send me on no more bootless errands.' The Premier seems to have understood, as, for some time, Gordon was left in peace. He heard nothing more from the Government about the journey into Basutoland, though he offered to resign his office of Commandant-General, and to be Resident with Masupha for two years at no more than £300 a year. He believed, he said, that in that time he could gain the old chief's confidence, and restore order to the country. No doubt he was right; but he was no longer his own master, and the heroic work of the Soudan was impossible in the superior civilization of the Cape.

In August, however, the Secretary for Native Affairs came to King William's Town, and after talking things over with Gordon, requested him to accompany him into Basutoland, whither he was going to see Mr. Orpen, the Ministerial representative. Gordon explained that, as he was averse from Orpen's policy, and as the Government had taken no notice of the convention he had suggested, he could be of no possible use; in other words, he told Mr. Sauer, *vivâ voce*, what he had already told the Premier by letter. Sauer, however, said that 'he was free of all engagements,' and urged the General to come with him. Gordon reluctantly gave way. In September he reached Basutoland, and had a personal interview

with Letsea—the chief, it will be remembered, who was feigning friendliness to the Government, and antagonism to the action taken by Masupha. After this interview Gordon was more than ever convinced that no *modus vivendi* could be arrived at except on such terms as those embodied in his proposed convention; and when he went to Leribe with Mr. Sauer, he presented that gentleman with a memorandum in which he laid down the utter futility of trying to settle matters by getting one set of Basutos to coerce another. This was Orpen's policy, and it had at least the tacit consent of the existing Government. Mr. Sauer, having considered the memorandum, asked the writer if he would go, *as a private individual*, to Masupha, and see what he could do. He made this request, knowing the General's views, and knowing also that Gordon would lead no force against the Basuto chief unless an improvement were made in the magistracy—that is, unless bad magistrates were replaced by good ones, and bad legislation abolished altogether. In a word, he knew perfectly well that Gordon sympathized with Masupha, as one more sinned against than sinning. All the same he persuaded the General to undertake this adventure, but gave him neither instructions nor credentials, and left him to act as he might think fit.

Gordon went, and went unarmed. How he ever got back, has been matter of astonishment to not a

few; for while he was negotiating with Masupha as a messenger of peace, Sauer, probably at Orpen's persuasion, got Letsea to send his son Lethrodi to attack Masupha. The Ministerial tactics consisted in allowing their representatives to settle the Basuto difficulty by egging on the chiefs to eat each other up. Of this Masupha was well aware: he had in his camp an emissary of peace, assuming a certain influence with the Cape Government, or at all events sent by a Cape Minister; while outside his camp he had a warlike demonstration organized and set afoot by the same Government and the same Minister. Gordon's power of inspiring savages with confidence in his complete uprightness, was probably what saved his life at this desperate pass, as at so many others in so many lands. Masupha, seeing his guest to be no less mortified and astounded than himself, allowed him to depart as he had come.

He departed next day, and his first act on reaching Aliwal North was to send this telegram (Sept. 26th, 1882) to the Under-Colonial Secretary at Cape Town: 'As I am in a false position up here, and am likely to do more harm than good, I propose leaving for the Colony, and when I have finished some Reports, I will come down to Cape Town, when I trust Government will accept my resignation.' Four days after (September 30th) he received this reply: 'The

Honourable the Premier has no objection to your coming to Cape Town as proposed.' Next day he sent another telegram to the Under-Colonial Secretary: he remembered that at Port Elizabeth he had agreed to serve the Government until Parliament met, and he felt bound to abide by his promise; he therefore telegraphed that, if it was desired, he would keep to his agreement. But the Premier relieved him of his promise in a telegram dated October 5th: 'The answer to your telegram, proposing to come to Cape Town, and expressing a wish that Government would accept your resignation, and to subsequent messages intimating that when you telegraphed it had escaped your memory that you had stated your willingness to remain till Parliament met: I have to state that I have no wish to hold you to your promise, and am now prepared to comply with the desire expressed, that your resignation should be accepted; after the intimation that you would not fight the Basutos, and considering the tenour of your communication with Masupha, I regret to record my conviction that your continuance in the position you occupy would not be conducive to public interest.'

Gordon replied that he was much obliged, and that it would be scarcely necessary for him to come to Cape Town. He added: 'Did I do so, it would be on the understanding that I was free. Government were not

ignorant of my antagonism to Mr. Orpen's policy, yet they wished me to go up with Mr. Sauer; therefore the sequel was to be expected.' To this the Premier replied that it was not necessary for the General to return to Cape Town, and that he did not doubt that the General's proposals to Masupha were good, considering the circumstances under which they were made, but that they were such as Government could not adopt, nor Parliament sanction.

And thus it came to pass, that a little more than five months after his arrival in South Africa, Gordon severed his connection with the only country which had proved unable to appreciate the value and use of the genius he placed at its disposal.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOLY LAND.

At last Gordon could be at rest; at last he could depart for Mount Carmel and be alone. Those in authority at the Cape had done thus much for him, if no more.

'My present idea,' he wrote, in the thick of his toils of 1876, 'is to lie in bed till eleven every day; in the afternoon to walk not farther than the docks; and not to undertake those terrible railway-journeys, or to get exposed to the questionings of people and their inevitable dinners—in fact, to get into a dormant state, and stay there till I am obliged to work. *I want oysters for lunch.*' This is a humorous paraphrase of an ideal, hopeless then and for long years after unattainable. No such time of rest had come for him till now. He had been to India on a bootless errand. He had gone to China—the ancient Empire to which he had brought new life and light—and saved her from war—perhaps defeat. He had served in Mauritius. He had laboured at the Cape, and perilled

his life for a crew of time-servers. Now, at last, he was his own master. He returned to London, and set out on a new pilgrimage to the East. He settled outside Jerusalem. There he lives on bread and fruits (tobacco he reserves for great occasions: Soochow and Dara, for instance) and gives the bulk of his pay to those who hunger and are in need. But after such a life of action, rest is impossible. How could it be otherwise for him who holds such views of the life beyond as these? 'The future world must be much more amusing, more enticing, more to be desired than this world—putting aside its absence of sorrow and sin. The future world has been somehow painted to our mind as a place of continuous praise; and, though we may not say it, yet one cannot help feeling that, if thus, it would prove monotonous. It cannot be thus. It must be a life of activity; for happiness is dependent on activity. Death is cessation of movement; life is all movement.'

Still, there are no terrible railway-journeys; there are no questionings—save those of stray interviewers; above all, there are no inevitable dinners; and he is happy. With an interest as keen as ever, he watches the world's affairs. But most of his time is devoted to research; and it is with an eagerness that is almost a passion that he pursues the survey of the Holy Sepulchre, the Tabernacle, and the walls of Jerusalem. Some of

his theories are curious and surprising; they puzzle those who have made the exploration of Palestine their life-study; they perplex, they irritate, they confound, and they end by almost persuading. He has taken the holy sites in hand to prove them not the holy sites at all: greatly to the horror and scandal of clerical tourists. But he is no mere iconoclast; he works as one seeing sermons in stones and good in everything—with the faith of a Christian but the eye and brain of an engineer. The Bible is his guide; and he 'does not care for sites if he has a map.' 'In reality,' he says, 'no man, in writing on these sites, ought to draw on his imagination; he ought to keep to the simple facts, and not prophesy or fill up gaps.' For his own part, he does no more than aim at proving the correctness of his ideas by elaborate diagrams and figures. But these are not his sole occupations. 'I have gone in for the stars in these splendid nights,' he says, 'and know them pretty fairly.' And his greatest interest of all, and his latest, is the proposed Jordan Canal; and the thoroughness with which he has gone into all the details of this enormous scheme is complete and unassailable.

How long Gordon will be permitted to pursue his present life it would be difficult to say. The long-drawn negotiations between France and China have caused many to wonder if his work in the Middle Kingdom is finished after all. Meanwhile, his opinion

on the probable issue of war has been asked and given with his usual candour. And now that we ourselves are face to face with new difficulties in Egypt and the Soudan, there are thousands who feel and say that, if we were wise, to him only should we look for deliverance. 'Where is Chinese Gordon?' asked a writer but the other day. 'At a moment like the present, when the Government need advice from all experts, General Gordon might give valuable aid in the counsels of the Cabinet. The British Government might do worse than give him *carte blanche* to act in the present crisis.'

There are many who cannot understand how Gordon, despite the obstacles in his way, has consistently maintained his unlikeness to the majority of men. It is because his spirit has ever refused to mould itself to the world. His is the high humanity that says, 'the procuring and boiling of potatoes is as much to a poor woman as the re-organizing of the army is to Cardwell;' his is the hope that says, 'ninety-nine men out of a hundred may be worthless, but we should go on and find the hundredth;' his is the tolerance that says, 'The Mussulman worships God as well as I do, and is as acceptable, if sincere, as any Christian.' It is because his hope in all things and his faith in God have never faltered, that his strength has never failed.

'No man ever had a harder task than I, unaided, have

before me; but it sits as a feather on me,' he said, in the midst of his great campaign in the Soudan. 'As Solomon asked, I ask wisdom to govern this great people; and not only will He give me it, but all else besides. And why? Because I value not the "all besides." I am quite as averse to slavery, and even more so than most people. I show it by sacrificing myself in these lands, which are no Paradise. I have naught to gain in name or riches. I do not care what man may say. I do what I think is pleasing to my God; and, as far as man goes, I need nothing from anyone. The Khedive never had directly gained any revenue from slaves. I now hold this place here; and I, who am on the spot with unlimited power, am able to judge how impotent he, at Cairo, is to stop the slave-trade. I can do it with God's help, and I have the conviction He has destined me to do it; for it was much against my will I came here. What I have to do is so to settle matters that I do not cause a revolution on my own death—not that I value life. I have done with its comforts in coming here. My work is great, but does not weigh me down. I go on as straight as I can. I feel my own weakness, and look to Him who is almighty; and I leave the issue without inordinate care to Him. I expect to ride 5,000 miles this year if I am spared. I am quite alone, and like it. I have become what people call a great fatalist, viz.: I

trust God will pull me through every difficulty. The solitary grandeur of the desert makes one feel how vain is the effort of man. This carries me through my troubles, and enables me to look on death as a coming relief, when it is His will. . . . It is only my firm conviction that I am only an instrument put in use for a time that enables me to bear up; and in my present state, during my long, hot, weary rides, I think my thoughts better and clearer than I should with a companion.'

It will be seen that his fatalism is not a belief in unchangeable destiny, independent of a controlling Cause; but a deep faith in a controlling Cause which guides the erring and props the weak. Here are some of the maxims which he has made himself, and by which his spiritual life is governed: 'It is a delightful thing to be a fatalist, not as that word is generally employed, but to accept that, *when things happen* and *not* before, God has for some wise reason so ordained them to happen—*all* things, not only the great things, but all the circumstances of life; that is what is meant to me by the words "you are dead," in St. Paul to Colossians.' Again: 'We have nothing further to do when the scroll of events is unrolled than to accept them as being for the best. *Before* it is *unrolled* it is another matter; and you could not say I sat still and let things happen with this belief. All

I can say is, that amidst troubles and worries no one can have peace till he thus stays upon his God; it gives a man a superhuman strength.' And elsewhere: 'If we could take all things as ordained and for the best, we should indeed be conquerors of the world. Nothing has ever happened to man so bad as he has anticipated it to be. If we would be quiet under our troubles they would not be so painful to bear. I cannot separate the existence of a God from His pre-ordination and direction of all things good and evil; the latter He permits, but still controls.' And for a glimpse of his out-look on life as it is: 'There would be no one so unwelcome to come and reside in the world as Christ while the world is in the state it now is. He would be dead against, say, nearly all of our pursuits, and be altogether *outré*. I gave you Watson on Contentment; it is this true exposition of how happiness is to be obtained—*i.e.*, submission to the will of God, whatever that will may be; he who can say he realizes this, has overcome the world and its trials. Everything that happens to-day, good or evil, is settled and fixed, and it is no use fretting over it. The quiet peaceful life of our Lord was solely due to His submission to God's will. There will be times when a strain will come on one; and as the strain, so will your strength be.' What to a spirit thus tempered are the kingdoms of this world?

As far as may be the story of Chinese Gordon is told. It has proved him a true soldier, a true statesman: a soldier whose aim in war is never the gains of victory, but the riches of peace, whose aim in peace is never loud-voiced glory, but silent self-denial; a statesman without fear and without reproach, whose statesmanship is founded on fearless justice and truth; in one word, a hero, who counts no conquest greater than the conquest of self. 'Search myself as I will, I find that in all my career I can lay no claim to cleverness, discretion, or wisdom. My success has been due to a series of (called by the world) flukes. My sense of independence is gone. I own nothing, and am nothing. I am a pauper, and seem to have ceased to exist. A sack of rice jolting along on a camel would do as much as *I think* I do. But how different it is in appearance to the world!' To this victorious humility the glories of battle, the triumphs of ambition, the great honours of life, are prizes not worth the winning.

A story as of the Temptation in the Wilderness might be told of the moral campaign he has waged upon such of the world's worst citizens—rebels from the Throne, outcasts of the Word—as have sought to lure him from his chosen way. For never, perhaps, was one loathing corruption cast more among the corrupt; never, perhaps, was one working for good

more tormented in his holy labours by workers of evil. Strong in the whole armour of God, he has fought the good fight, and prevailed, and has his reward. It is not enough that a traveller riding in his tracks through the Soudan found the poor people he had ruled crying out for his return, as for that of one divine; it is not enough that he is the one Christian for whom they offer yearly prayers at Mecca. In all parts of the world there are men who delight to tell of his perfections—of faith, and benevolence, and daring; there are men who would shed their last blood for him, men who deem him a prophet heaven-sent and invulnerable, men who fall prostrate at the murmur of his name. But the unsaid is better than the said. To look back on a career so rich in good deeds is to feel that what is hidden is greater than what is revealed; and that, in this age of vanity, the love of self-suppression which leaves the record scant is greatest and most inspiriting of all.

It is time to pause. I have written enough for his countrymen; too much for him who would rather be buried than praised. I shall say no more than that he has gone to the Holy Land to be forgotten, that he may come home and live among the London poor, and minister to them in their great need.

THE END.

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